

THE

1506/320.

SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL,

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.

1800.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir Peter Teazle,	- - - -	Mr King.
Sir Oliver Surface,	- - - -	Mr Aickin.
Joseph Surface,	- - - -	Mr Wroughton.
Charles,	- - - -	Mr Suett.
Sir Benjamin Backbite,	- - - -	Mr R. Palmer.
Rowley,	- - - -	Mr Packer.
Moses,	- - - -	Mr Wathen.
Careless,	- - - -	Mr C. Kemble.
Trip,	- - - -	Mr Trueman.
Snake,	- - - -	Mr Caulfield.

WOMEN.

Lady Teazle,	- - - -	Mrs Jordan.
Maria,	- - - -	Miss Miller.
Lady Sneerwell,	- - - -	Mrs Goodall.
Mrs Candour,	- - - -	Miss Pope.

SCENE---London.

THE
SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

LADY SNEERWELL'S House.

LADY SNEERWELL and SNAKE discovered at a Tea-table.

Lady S. The paragraphs, you say, Mr Snake, were all inserted?

Snake. They were, madam; and, as I copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be no suspicion from whence they came.

Lady S. Did you circulate the report of Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain Boastall?

Snake. That's in as fine a train as your ladyship could wish in the common course of things. I think it must reach Mrs Clacket's ears in four-and-twenty hours, and then the business, you know, is as good as done.

Lady S. Why yes, Mrs Clacket has talents, and a good deal of industry.

Snake. True, madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day. To my knowledge she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons disinherited; of four forced elopements, as many close confinements, nine separate maintenances, and two divorces;—nay, I have more than once traced her causing a *tête-a-tête* in the Town and Country Magazine, when the parties never saw one another in their lives.

Lady S. Why yes, she has genius, but her manner is too gross.

Snake. True, madam; she has a fine tongue, and a bold invention: but then her colouring is too dark, and the outlines rather too extravagant; she wants that delicacy of hint, and mellowness of sneer, which distinguishes your ladyship's scandal.

Lady S. You are partial, Snake.

Snake. Not in the least; every body will allow, that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or look, than many others with the most laboured detail, even though they accidentally happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

Lady S. Yes, my dear Snake, and I'll not deny the pleasure I feel at the success of my schemes. [Both rise.] Wounded myself, in the early part of my life, by the envenom'd tongue of slander, I confess nothing can give me greater satisfaction than reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation.

Snake. True, madam; but there is one affair, in which you have lately employed me, wherein I confess I am at a loss to guess at your motives.

Lady S. I presume you mean with regard to my friend, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family.

Snake. I do; here are two young men, to whom Sir Peter has acted as a guardian since their father's death; the eldest possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of; the youngest, the most dissipated, wild, extravagant, young fellow in the world; the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship, and apparently your favourite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly admired by her. Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me, why you, the widow of a city knight, with a large fortune, should not immediately close with the passion of a man of such a character and expectation as Mr Surface; and more so, why you are so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

Lady S. Then at once, to unravel this mystery, I must inform you, that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr Surface and me.

Snake. No!

Lady S. No. His real views are to Maria, or her fortune, while in his brother he finds a favoured rival; he is, therefore, obliged to mask his real intentions, and profit by my assistance.

Snake. Yet still I am ~~perplexed~~, why you should interest yourself for his sake.

Lady S. Heavens! ~~how~~ don't you see! Can't you sur-



mise a weakness I have hitherto, through shame, concealed even from you? Must I confess it, that Charles, that profligate, that libertine, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation, that he it is for whom I am thus anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice every thing.

Snake. Now indeed your conduct appears consistent; but pray, how came you and Mr Surface so confidential?

Lady S. For our mutual interest; he pretends to, and recommends, sentiment and liberality; but I know him to be artful, close, and malicious: in short, a sentimental knave; while with Sir Peter, and indeed with most of his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of virtue, good sense, and benevolence.

Snake. Yes, I know Sir Peter vows he has not his fellow in England, and has praised him as a man of character and sentiment.

Lady S. Yes; and, with the appearance of being sentimental, he has brought Sir Peter to favour his addresses to Maria, while poor Charles has no friend in the house, though I fear he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mr Surface, madam.

Lady S. Shew him up: [Exit SERVANT.] he generally calls about this hour—I don't wonder at people's giving him to me for a lover.

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE.

Jos. Lady Sneerwell, good morning to you—Mr Snake, your most obedient.

Lady S. Snake has just been rallying me upon our attachment, but I have told him our real views; I need not tell you how useful he has been to us; and, believe me, our confidence has not been ill placed.

Jos. Oh, madam, 'tis impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr Snake's merits and accomplishments.

Lady S. Oh, no compliments; but tell me when you saw Maria, or, what's more material to us, your brother?

Jos. I have not seen either since I left you, but I can tell you they never met; some of your stories have had a good effect in that quarter.

Lady S. The merit of this, my dear Snake, belongs to you; but do your brother's distresses increase?

Snake. Not in the least; every body will allow, that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or look, than many others with the most laboured detail, even though they accidentally happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

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Lady S. The merit of this, my dear Snake, belongs to you; but do your brother's distresses increase?

Jos. Every hour. I am told he had another execution in his house yesterday—in short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed any thing ever heard.

Lady S. Poor Charles!

Jos. Ay, poor Charles, indeed! notwithstanding his extravagance one cannot help pitying him. I wish it was in my power to be of any essential service to him; for the man who does not feel for the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves to be—

Lady S. Now you are going to be moral, and forget you are among friends.

Jos. 'Gad, so I was, ha, ha, ha!—I'll keep that sentiment 'till I see Sir Peter, ha, ha! however, it would certainly be a generous act in you to rescue Maria from such a libertine, who, if he is to be reclaimed at all, can only be so by a person of your superior accomplishments, and understanding.

Snake. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming. I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to your ladyship. Mr Surface, your most obedient. [Exit.]

Jos. Mr Snake, your most obedient. I wonder, Lady Sneerwell, you would put any confidence in that fellow.

Lady S. Why so?

Jos. I have discovered he has of late had several conferences with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward; he has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

Lady S. And do you think he would betray us?

Jos. Not unlikely; and take my word for it, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow has not virtue enough to be faithful to his own villanies.

Enter MARIA.

Lady S. Ah, Maria, my dear, how do you do? What's the matter?

Mar. Nothing, madam, only this odious lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, and his uncle Crabtree, just called in at my guardian's; but I took the first opportunity to slip out, and run to your ladyship.

Lady S. Is that all?

Jos. Had my brother Charles been of the party, you would not have been so much alarmed.

Lady S. Nay, now you are too severe; for I dare say the truth of the matter is, Maria heard you was here, and

therefore came ; but pray, Maria, what particular objection have you to Sir Benjamin, that you avoid him so ?

Mar. Oh, madam, he has done nothing ; but his whole conversation is a perpetual libel upon all his acquaintance.

Jos. Yes, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him, for he would abuse a stranger as soon as his best friend, and his uncle is as bad.

Mar. For my part, I own wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice,—what think you, Mr Surface ?

Jos. To be sure, madam—to smile at a jest, that plants a thorn in the breast of another, is to become a principal in the mischief.

Lady S. Pshaw—there is no possibility of being witty without a little ill-nature : the malice in a good thing is the barb that makes it stick—What is your real opinion, Mr Surface ?

Jos. Why my opinion is, that where the spirit of railing is suppressed, the conversation must be naturally insipid.

Mar. Well, I will not argue how far slander may be allowed ; but in a man, I am sure it is despicable.—We have pride, envy, rivalry, and a thousand motives to depreciate each other ; but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman before he can traduce one.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mrs Candour, madam, if you are at leisure, will leave her carriage.

Lady S. Desire her to walk up. [Exit SERVANT.] Now, Maria, here's a character to your taste ; though Mrs Candour is a little talkative, yet every body allows she is the best-natured sort of a woman in the world.

Mar. Yes—with the very gross affection of good nature, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

Jos. Faith, 'tis very true, and whenever I hear the current of abuse running hard against the characters of my best friends, I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defence.

Lady S. Hush ! hush ! here she is.

Enter MRS CANDOUR.

Mrs C. Oh ! my dear Lady Sneerwell ; well, how do

you do ? Mr Surface, your most obedient.—Is there any Sir news abroad ? No ! nothing good, I suppose.—No, nothing but scandal ! nothing but scandal !

Jos. Just so indeed, madam.

Mrs C. Nothing but scandal !—Ah, Maria, how do you do, child ? what, is every thing at an end between you and Charles ? What, is he too extravagant ?—Ay, the town talks of nothing else.

Mar. I am sorry, madam, the town is so ill employed.

Mrs C. Ay, so am I, child—but what can one do ? we can't stop people's tongues.—They hint too, that your guardian and his lady don't live so agreeably together as they did.

Mar. I am sure such reports are without foundation.

Mrs C. Ay, so things generally are :—'Tis like Mrs Fashion's affair with Colonel Coterie ; though, indeed, that affair was never rightly cleared up ; and it was but yesterday Miss Prim assured me, that Mr and Mrs Honeymoon are now become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted, that a certain widow in the next street had got rid of her dropsy, and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner.

Jos. The licence of invention some people give themselves is astonishing.

Mrs C. 'Tis so—but how will you stop people's tongues ? 'Twas but yesterday Mrs Clacket informed me, that our old friend, Miss Prudely was going to elope, and that her guardian caught her just stepping into the York Diligence with her dancing-master. I was informed too, that Lord Flimsy caught his wife at a house of no extraordinary fame and that Tom Saunter and Sir Harry Idle were to measure swords on a similar occasion. But I dare say there is no truth in the story, and I would not circulate such a report for the world.

Jos. You report ! no, no, no !

Mrs C. No, no,—tale-bearers are just as bad as the tale-makers.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir Benjamin Backbite and Mr Crabtree. [Exit]

Enter SIR BENJAMIN and CRABTREE.

Grab. Lady Sneerwell, your most obedient humble servant. Mrs Candour, I believe you don't know my nephew

any Sir Benjamin Backbite ; he has a pretty taste for poetry, which shall make a rebus or a charade with any one.

Sir B. Oh fie, uncle !

Crab. In faith he will : did you hear the lines he made you at Lady Ponto's rout, on Mrs Frizzle's feathers catching fire ; and the rebusses—his first in the name of a fish ; the next a great naval commander, and—

Sir B. Uncle, now, pr'ythee.

Lady S. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish any thing.

Sir B. Why, to say the truth, 'tis very vulgar to print, and as my little productions are chiefly satires, and lampoons on particular persons, I find they circulate better by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties ;—

Mrs however, I have some love elegies, which when favoured by this lady's smiles, [To MARIA.] I mean to give to the public.

moon *Crab.* 'Foregad, madam, they'll immortalize you, [To their MARIA.] you will be handed down to posterity, like Pe-
widow rarch's Laura, or Waller's Sacharissa.

Sir B. Yes, madam, I think you'll like them, [To MARIA.] when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto type, where a neat rivulet of text shall murmur through a meadow of margin ;—foregad they shall be the most elegant things of their kind.

Crab. But odso, ladies, did you hear the news ?

Mrs C. What—do you mean the report of—

Crab. No, madam, that's not it—Miss Nicely going to be married to her own footman.

Mrs C. Impossible !

Sir B. 'Tis very true indeed, madam ; every thing is fixed, and the wedding liveries bespoke.

Crab. Yes, and they do say there was very pressing reasons for it.

Mrs C. I heard something of this before.

Lady S. Oh ! it cannot be ; and I wonder they'd report such a thing of so prudent a lady.

Sir B. Oh ! but, madam, that is the very reason that was believed at once ; for she has always been so very cautious and reserved, that every body thought there was some reason for it at bottom.

Mrs C. It is true, there is a sort of puny, sickly repu-

tation, that would outlive the robuster character of a hundred prudes.

Sir B. True, madam; there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as constitution, who, being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air, and supply their want of stamina by care; and circumstances have often given rise to the most ingenious tales.

Crab. Very true;—but odso, ladies, did you hear o Miss Letitia Piper's losing her lover and her character a Scarborough? Sir Benjamin, you remember it?

Sir B. Oh, to be sure, the most whimsical circumstance

Lady S. Pray let us hear it.

Crab. Why, one evening, at Lady Spadille's assembly the conversation happened to turn upon the difficulty of breeding Nova Scotia sheep in this country; no, says lady present, I have seen an instance of it, for a cousin of mine, Miss Letitia Piper, had one that produced twins! What, what, says old Lady Dundizzy, (whom we all know is as deaf as a post) has Miss Letitia Piper had twins!—This, you may easily imagine, set the company in a loud laugh: and the next morning it was every where reported, and believed, that Miss Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and girl.

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha!

Crab. 'Tis true, upon my honour.—Oh, Mr Surface, how do you do? I hear your uncle, Sir Oliver is expectant in town; sad news upon his arrival, to hear how your brother has gone on.

Jos. I hope no busy people have already prejudiced h uncle against him—he may reform.

Sir B. True, he may; for my part, I never thought him so utterly void of principle as people say—and though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of among the Jews.

Crab. 'Foregad, if the old Jewry was a ward, Charlie would be an alderman, for he pays as many annuities to the Irish Tontine; and when he is sick, they have prayed for his recovery in all the Synagogues.

Sir B. Yet no man lives in greater splendour—They tell me, when he entertains his friends, he can sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities, have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antichamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

Jos. This may be entertaining to you, gentlemen; but
of all you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

Mar. Their malice is intolerable. [Aside.] Lady Sneer-
in well, I must wish you a good morning; I am not very
ous of well. [Exit MARIA.]

Mrs C. She changes colour.

Lady S. Do, Mrs Candour, follow her.

Mrs C. To be sure I will:—poor dear girl, who knows
hat her situation may be. [Mrs CANDOUR follows her.]

Lady S. 'Twas nothing, but that she could not bear to
ear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

Sir B. The young lady's *penchant* is obvious.

Crab. Come, don't let this dishearten you—follow her,
embly and repeat some of your odes to her, and I'll assist you.

Sir B. Mr Surface, I don't mean to hurt you, but de-
says end on't your brother is utterly undone.

Crab. Oh! undone as ever man was—can't raise a
twine quinea.

Sir B. Every thing is sold, I am told, that was move-
ins !—ole.

Crab. Not a moveable left, except some old bottles and
report me pictures, and they seemed to be framed in wainscot,
ly bee gad.

Sir B. I am sorry to hear also some bad stories of him.

Crab. Oh! he has done many mean things, that's cer-
Surfa in.

Sir B. But, however, he's your brother.

Crab. Ay, as he's your brother—we'll tell you more a-
other opportunity. [Exeunt CRAB. and SIR BENJ.

Lady S. 'Tis very hard for them, indeed, to leave a sub-
ject they have not quite run down.

Jos. And I fancy their abuse was no more acceptable to
ough our ladyship than to Maria.

Lady S. I doubt her affections are farther engaged than
we imagine;—but the family are to be here this afternoon,

Charles you may as well dine where you are; we shall have an
uities opportunity of observing her further:—in the mean time,

pray all go and plot mischief, and you shall study. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House.—Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE.

Sir P. When an old bachelor marries a young wife what is he to expect? 'Tis now above six months since my Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men, and I have been the most miserable dog ever since. We tifted a little going to church, and fairly quarrelled before the bells were done ringing. I was more than once nearly choaked with gall, during the honey-moon; and had lost every satisfaction in life, before my friends had done wishing me joy. And yet, I chose with caution a girl bred wholly in the country, who had never known luxury beyond one silk gown, or dissipation beyond the annual gala of a race-ball. Yet now, she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the town, with as good a grace as if she had never seen a bush or a grass-plot out of Grosvenor-square. I am sneered at by all my acquaintance—paragraphed in the newspapers—she dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humours. And yet, the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this—but I am determined never to let her know it.—No, no, no!

Enter Rowley.

Rowl. Sir Peter, your servant: how do you find yourself to-day?

Sir P. Very bad, Mr Rowley; very bad, indeed.

Rowl. I'm sorry to hear that—what has happened to make you so uneasy since yesterday?

Sir P. A pretty question, truly, to a married man.

Rowl. Sure my lady is not the cause!

Sir P. Why! has any one told you she was dead?

Rowl. Come, come, Sir Peter, notwithstanding you sometimes dispute and disagree, I am sure you love her.

Sir P. Ay, Mr Rowley; but the worst of it is, that all our disputes and quarrels, she is ever in the wrong, and continues to thwart and vex me;—I am myself the sweetest-tempered man in the world, and so I tell her a hundred times a-day.

Rowl. Indeed, Sir Peter!

Sir P. Yes; and then there's Lady Sneerwell, and the set she meets at her house, encourage her to disobedience.

and Maria, my ward, she too presumes to have a will of her own, and refuses the man I propose to her; designing, I suppose, to bestow herself and fortune upon that profligate, his brother.

Row. You know, Sir Peter, I have often taken the liberty to differ in opinion with you, in regard to these two young men; for Charles, my life on't, will retrieve all one day or other.—Their worthy father, my once honoured master, at his years, was full as wild and extravagant as Charles now is: but at his death he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

Sir P. You are wrong, Mr Rowley; you are very wrong:—by their father's will, you know, I became guardian to these young men, which gave me an opportunity of knowing their different dispositions; but their uncle's Eastern liberality soon took them out of my power, by giving them an early independence.—But for Charles, whatever good qualities he might have inherited, they are long since squandered away with the rest of his fortune; Joseph, indeed, is a pattern for the young men of the age—a youth of the noblest sentiments, and acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Row. Well, well, Sir Peter, I sha'n't oppose your opinion at present, though I am sorry you are prejudiced against Charles, as this may probably be the most critical period of his life, for his uncle, Sir Oliver, is arrived, and now in town.

Sir P. What! my old friend, Sir Oliver, is he arrived? I thought you had not expected him this month.

Row. No more we did, sir; but his passage has been remarkably quick.

Sir P. I shall be heartily glad to see him.—'Tis sixteen years since old Nol and I met.—But does he still enjoin us to keep his arrival secret from his nephews?

Row. He does, sir: and is determined, under a feigned character, to make trial of their different dispositions.

Sir P. Ah! there is no need of it; for Joseph, I am sure, is the man.—But harkye, Rowley, does Sir Oliver know that I am married?

Row. He does, sir; and intends shortly to wish you joy.

Sir P. What, as we wish health to a friend in a consumption. But I must have him at my house—do you

conduct him, Rowley ; I'll go and give orders for his reception. (*Going.*) We used to rail at matrimony together —he has stood firm to his text. But, Rowley, don't give him the least hint that my wife and I disagree, for I would have him think (Heaven forgive me !) that we are a very happy couple.

Row. Then you must be careful not to quarrel whilst he is here.

Sir P. And so we must—but that will be impossible ! —Zounds, Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves—ay, he deserves—no, the crime carries the punishment along with it. [Exit.]

ACT II.—SCENE I.

SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House.

Enter SIR PETER and LADY TEAZLE.

Sir P. Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I won't bear it.

Lady T. Very well, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, just as you please ; but I know I ought to have my own way in every thing ; and what's more, I will.

Sir P. What, madam ! is there no respect due to the authority of a husband ?

Lady T. Why ; don't I know, that no woman of fashion does as she is bid after her marriage ? Though I was bred in the country, I'm no stranger to that ; if you wanted me to be obedient, you should have adopted me, and not married me—I'm sure you were old enough.

Sir P. Ay, there it is—Gons, madam, what right have you to run into all this extravagance ?

Lady T. I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of quality ought to be.

Sir P. 'Slife, madam, I'll have no more sums squandered away upon such unmeaning luxuries : you have as many flowers in your dressing-room as would turn the Pantheon into a green-house ; or make a Fete Champetre at a mas—

Lady T. Lord, Sir Peter, am I to blame that flowers don't blow in cold weather ; you must blame the climate, and not me—I'm sure, for my part, I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet.

Sir P. Zounds, madam, I should not wonder at your extravagance if you had been bred to it. Had you any of these things before you married me?

Lady T. Lord, Sir Peter, how can you be angry at those little elegant expenses?

Sir P. Had you any of those little elegant expenses when you married me?

Lady T. Very true, indeed; and after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again.

Sir P. Very well, very well, madam; you have entirely forgot what your situation was when I first saw you.

Lady T. No, no; I have not; a very disagreeable situation it was, or I'm sure I never would have married you.

Sir P. You forget the humble state I took you from—the daughter of a poor country 'squire. When I came to your father's, I found you sitting at your tambour, in a linen gown, a bunch of keys at your side, and your hair combed smoothly over a roll.

Lady T. Yes, I remember very well;—my daily occupations were, to overlook the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt-book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lap-dog.

Sir P. Oh! I am glad to find you have so good a recollection.

Lady T. My evening employments were to draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not materials to make up; play at Pope Joan with the curate; read a sermon to my aunt Deborah, or perhaps be stuck up at an old spinnet, and thrum my father to sleep after a fox-chace.

Sir P. Then you was glad to take a ride out behind the butler upon the old dock'd coach-horse.

Lady T. No, no; I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

Sir P. I say you did. This was your situation.—Now, madam, you must have your coach, viz-a-viz, and three powdered footmen to walk before your chair; and in summer, two white cats to draw you to Kensington-gardens: and instead of your living in that hole in the country, I have brought you home here, made a woman of fortune of you, a woman of quality—in short, I have made you my wife.

Lady T. Well, and there is but one thing more you can now add to the obligation, and that is—

Sir P. To make you my widow, I suppose.

Lady T. Hem!—

Sir P. Very well, madam; very well; I am much obliged to you for the hint.

Lady T. Why then will you force me to say shocking things to you. But now we have finished our morning conversation, I presume I may go to my engagements at Lady Sneerwell's.

Sir P. Lady Sneerwell!—a precious acquaintance you have made of her too, and the set that frequent her house. Such a set, mercy on us! Many a wretch who has been drawn upon a hurdle, has done less mischief than those barterers of forged lies, coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation.

Lady T. How can you be so severe? I am sure they are all people of fashion, and very tenacious of reputation.

Sir P. Yes, so tenacious of it, they'll not allow it to any but themselves.

Lady T. I vow, Sir Peter, when I say an ill-natured thing, I mean no harm by it, for I take it for granted they'd do the same by me.

Sir P. They've made you as bad as any of them.

Lady T. Yes—I think I bear my part with a tolerable good grace.

Sir P. Grace indeed!

Lady T. Well, but Sir Peter, you know you promised to come.

Sir P. Well, I shall just call in to look after my own character.

Lady T. Then, upon my word, you must make haste after me, or you'll be too late. [Exit.]

Sir P. I have got much by my intended expostulation.—What a charming air she has!—What a neck! and how pleasingly she shews her contempt of my authority!—Well, though I can't make her love me, 'tis some pleasure to tease her a little, and I think she never appears to such advantage, as when she is doing every thing to vex and plague me. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

LADY SNEERWELL'S House.

**Enter LADY SNEERWELL, CRAETREE, SIR BENJAMIN, JOSEPH,
MRS CANDOUR, and MARIA.**

Lady S. Nay, positively we'll have it.

Jos. Ay, ay, the epigram, by all means.

Sir B. Oh ! plague on't, 'tis mere nonsense.

Crab. 'Faith, ladies, 'twas excellent for an extempore.

Sir B. But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstances.—You must know, that one day last week, as Lady Bab Currie was taking the dust in Hyde-park, in a sort of duodecimo phæton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies : upon which I took out my pocket-book, and in a moment produced the following :—

" Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies,

Other horses are clowns, and these macaronies ;

To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,

Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long."

Crab. There, ladies,—done in the crack of a whip—and on horseback too.

Jos. Oh ! a Phœbus mounted—

Mrs C. I must have a copy.

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

Lady S. Lady Teazle, how do you do ?—I hope we shall see Sir Peter.

Lady T. I believe he will wait on your ladyship presently.

Lady S. Maria, my love, you look grave ; come, you shall sit down to piquet with Mr Surface.

Mar. I take very little pleasure in cards—but I'll do as your ladyship pleases.

Lady T. I wonder he would sit down to cards with Maria.—I thought he would have taken an opportunity of speaking to me before Sir Peter came. [Aside.]

Mrs C. Well, now I'll forswear his society. [Aside.]

Lady T. What's the matter, Mrs Candour ?

Mrs C. Why, they are censorious, they won't allow our friend, Miss Vermilion, to be handsome.

Lady S. Oh, surely she's a pretty woman.

Crab. I'm glad you think so.

Mrs C. She has a charming fresh colour.

Lady T. Yes, when it is fresh put on.

Mrs C. Well, I'll swear 'tis natural, for I've seen it come and go.

Lady T. Yes, it comes at night, and goes again in the morning.

Sir B. True, madam, it only goes and comes; but what's more, egad, her maid can fetch and carry it.

Mrs C. Well—and what do you think of her sister?

Crab. What, Mrs Evergreen—'foregad, she's six-and-fifty if she's a day.

Mrs C. Nay, I'll swear two or three-and-sixty is the outside—I don't think she looks more.

Sir B. Oh, there's no judging by her looks, unless we could see her face.

Lady S. Well, if Mrs Evergreen does take some pains to repair the ravages of time, she certainly effects it with great ingenuity, and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the Widow Oaker chalks her wrinkles.

Sir B. Nay, now, my Lady Sneerwell, you are too severe upon the widow.—Come, it is not that she paints so ill, but when she has finished her face, she joints it so badly to her neck, that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur may see at once, that the head is modern, though the trunk is antique.

Crab. What do you think of Miss Simper?

Sir B. Why she has pretty teeth.

Lady T. Yes, and upon that account never shuts her mouth, but keeps it always a-jar, as it were, thus.

[*Shews her teeth.*

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady T. And yet I vow that's better than the pains Mrs Prim takes to conceal her loss in front—she draws her mouth till it resembles the aperture of a poor-box, and all her words appear to slide out edge-ways, as it were, thus—"How do you do, madam?—Yes, madam."

Lady S. Ha, ha, ha! very well, Lady Teazle; I vow you appear to be a little severe.

Lady T. In defence of a friend, you know, it is but just—But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry,

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir P. Ladies, your servant.—Mercy upon me!—the whole set—a character dead at every sentence. *(Aside.)*

Mrs C. They won't allow good qualities to any one—not even good-nature to our friend, Mrs Pursey.

Crab. What! the old fat dowager who was at Mrs Quadrille's last night.

Mrs C. Her bulk is her misfortune; and when she takes such pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

Lady S. That's very true, indeed.

Lady T. Yes; I'm told she absolutely lives upon acid and small whey, and laces herself with pullies;—often, in the hottest day in summer, you will see her on a little squat pony, with her hair plaited and turned up like a drummer, and away she goes puffing round the ring in a full trot.

Sir P. Mercy on me! this is her own relation; a person they dine with twice a-week. *(Aside.)*

Mrs C. I vow you sha'n't be so severe upon the dowager; for, let me tell you, great allowances are to be made for a wofman who strives to pass for a flirt at six-and-thirty.

Lady S. Though surely she's handsome still; and for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candle-light, 'tis not to be wondered at.

Mrs C. Very true; and for her manner, I think it very graceful, considering she never had any education; for her mother, you know, was a Welsh milliner, and her father a sugar-baker at Bristol.

Sir B. Ay, you are both of you too good-natured.

Mrs C. Well, I never will join in the ridicule of a friend; so I tell my cousin Ogle, and ye all know what retensions she has to beauty.

Crab. She has the oddest countenance—a collection of tures from all the corners of the globe.

Sir B. She has indeed an Irish front.

Crab. Caledonian locks.

Sir B. Dutch nose.

Crab. Austrian lips.

Sir B. The complexion of a Spaniard.

Crab. And teeth *a la Chinoise*.

Sir B. In short, her face resembles a *table-d'hote* at Spa, where no two guests are of a nation.

Crab. Or a congress at the close of a general war, where

every member seems to have a different interest, and the nose and the chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

Sir B. Ha, ha, ha !

Lady S. Ha, ha—Well, I vow, you are a couple of provoking toads.

Mrs C. Well, I vow you sha'n't carry the laugh so,—let me tell you that, Mrs Ogle—

Sir P. Madam, madam, 'tis impossible to stop those good gentlemen's tongues ; but when I tell you, Mrs Candour, that the lady they are speaking of is a particular friend of mine, I hope you will be so good as not to undertake her defence.

Lady S. Well said, Sir Peter ; but you are a cruel creature, too phlegmatic yourself for a wit, and too peevish to allow it to others.

Sir P. True wit, madam, is more nearly allied to good nature than you are aware of.

Lady T. True, Sir Peter ; I believe they are so near a-kin that they can never be united.

Sir B. Or rather, madam, suppose them to be man and wife, one so seldom sees them together.

Lady T. But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, believe he would have it put down by parliament.

Sir P. 'Foregad, madam, if they considered the sporting with reputation of as much consequence as poaching on manners, and passed an act for the preservation of fame they would find many would thank them for the bill.

Lady S. O lud !—Sir Peter would deprive us of our privileges.

Sir P. Yes, madam ; and none should then have the liberty to kill characters, and run down reputations, by privileged old maids, and disappointed widows.

Lady S. Go, you monster !

Mrs C. But surely you would not be so severe on those who only report what they hear ?

Sir P. Yes, madam, I would have a law for them too and whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found the injured party should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

Crab. Well, I verily believe, there never was a scandalous story without some foundation.

Sir P. Nine out of ten are formed on some malicious invention, or idle representation.

Lady S. Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

Enter a SERVANT, who whispers SIR PETER.

Sir P. I'll come directly—I'll steal away unperceived.

[Aside.]

Lady S. Sir Peter, you're not leaving us?

Sir P. I beg pardon, ladies; 'tis particular business, and I must—But I leave my character behind me. [Exit.]

Sir B. Well, certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being; I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily, if he was not your husband.

Lady T. Oh, never mind that—this way.

[They walk up, and exit.]

Jos. You take no pleasure in this society.

Mar. How can I? If to raise a malicious smile, at the misfortunes and infirmities of those who are unhappy, be a proof of wit and humour, Heaven grant me a double portion of dulness.

Jos. And yet they have no malice in their hearts.

Mar. Then it is the more inexcusable, since nothing but an ungovernable depravity of heart could tempt them to such a practice.

Jos. And is it possible, Maria, that you can thus feel for others, and yet be cruel to me alone?—Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

Mar. Why will you persist to persecute me on a subject on which you have long since known my sentiments.

Jos. Oh, Maria, you would not be thus deaf to me, but that Charles, that libertine, is still a favoured rival.

Mar. Ungenerously urged! but whatever my sentiments are, with regard to that unfortunate young man, be assured, I shall not consider myself more bound to give him up, because his misfortunes have lost him the regard—even of a brother. [Going.]

Jos. Nay, Maria, you shall not leave me with a frown. By all that's honest I swear—[Kneels, and sees LADY T. entering behind.] Ah! Lady Teazle; ah! you shall not stir—(To MARIA.) I have the greatest regard in the world for Lady Teazle, but if Peter was once to suspect—

Mar. Lady Teazle!—

Lady T. What is all this, child? You are wanted in the next room. [Exit MARIA.] What is the meaning of all this?—What! did you take her for me?

Jos. Why, you must know—Maria—by some means suspecting—the—great regard I entertain for your ladyship—was threatening—if I did not desist, to acquaint Sir Peter—and I—I—was just reasoning with her—

Lady T. You seem to have adopted a very tender method of reasoning—pray, do you usually argue on your knees?

Jos. Why, you know she's but a child, and I thought a little bombast might be useful to keep her silent. But, my dear Lady Teazle, when will you come and give me your opinion of my library?

Lady T. Why, I really begin to think it not so proper; and you know I admit you as a lover no farther than fashion dictates.

Jos. Oh, no more;—a mere Platonic Cicisbeo, that every lady is entitled to.

Lady T. No further—and though Sir Peter's treatment may make me uneasy, it shall never provoke me—

Jos. To the only revenge in your power.

Lady T. Go, you insinuating wretch—but we shall be missed, let us join the company.

Jos. I'll follow your ladyship.

Lady T. Don't stay long, for I promise you Maria sha'n't come to hear any more of your reasoning. [Exit.

Jos. A pretty situation I am in—by gaining the wife I shall lose the heiress—I at first intended to make her ladyship only the instrument in my designs on Maria, but—I don't know how it is—I am become her serious admirer. I begin now to wish I had not made a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has brought me into so many confounded rogueries, that I fear I shall be exposed at last.

SCENE III.

SIR PETER TEAZLE'S House.

Enter SIR OLIVER and ROWLEY.

Sir O. Ha, ha, and so my old friend is married at last eh, Rowley—and to a young wife out of the country, ha, ha, ha! That he should buff to old bachelors so long, and sink into a husband at last.

Rowl. But let me beg of you, sir, not to rally him upon the subject, for he cannot bear it, though he has been married these seven months.

Sir O. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance. Poor Sir Peter!—But you say he has entirely given up Charles—never sees him, eh?

Rowl. His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I believe it is greatly aggravated by a suspicion of a connection between Charles and Lady Teazle; and such a report I know has been circulated and kept up, by means of Lady Sneerwell, and a scandalous party, who associate at her house; where, I am convinced, if there is any partiality in the case, Joseph is the favourite.

Sir O. Ay, ay—I know there are a set of mischievous prattling gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time, and rob a young fellow of his good name, before he has sense enough to know the value of it:—But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by any such, I promise you—No, no, if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

Rowl. I rejoice, sir, to hear you say so; and am happy to find the son of my old master has one friend left, however.

[*Exit.* *Rowl.* Whaf, shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself?—egad, neither my brother nor I were very prudent youths, and yet, I believe, you have not seen many better men than your old master was.

Rowl. 'Tis that reflection I build my hopes on—and, my life on't, Charles will prove deserving of your kindness.—But here comes Sir Peter.

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir P. Where is he?—Where is Sir Oliver?—Ah, my dear friend, I rejoice to see you!—You are welcome to England a thousand, and a thousand times.

Sir O. Thank you, thank you, Sir Peter—and I am glad to find you so well, believe me.

Sir P. Ah, Sir Oliver!—'Tis sixteen years since last we saw each other—many a bout we have had together in our time!

Sir O. Ay, I have had my share—But what, I find you're married—hey, old boy!—Well, well, it can't be helped, and so I wish you joy with all my heart.

Sir P. Thank you, thank you.—Yes, Sir Oliver, I have entered into that happy state—but we won't talk of that now.

Sir O. That's true, Sir Peter, old friends should not begin upon grievances at their first meeting, no, no, no.

Rowl. [Aside to SIR OLIVER.] Have a care, sir—don't touch upon that subject.

Sir O. Well—so one of my nephews, I find, is a wild young rogue.

Sir P. Oh, my friend, I grieve at your disappointment there—Charles is, indeed, a sad libertine—but no matter, Joseph will make you ample amends—every body speaks well of him.

Sir O. I am sorry to hear it; he has too good a character to be an honest fellow.—Every body speaks well of him—pshaw—then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools, as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.

Sir P. What the plague! are you angry with Joseph for not making enemies?

Sir O. Why not, if he has merit enough to deserve them?

Sir P. Well, we'll see him, and you'll be convinced how worthy he is.—He's a pattern for all the young men of the age.—He's a man of the noblest sentiments.

Sir O. Oh! plague of his sentiments—if he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick directly.—But don't however mistake me, Sir Peter, I don't mean to defend Charles's errors; but before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts, and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for that purpose.

Sir P. My life on Joseph's honour.

Sir O. Well, well, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink your lady's health, and tell you all our scheme.

Sir P. Alons—done.

Sir O. And don't, Sir Peter, be too severe against your old friend's son.—Odds my life, I am not sorry he has run a little out of the course—for my part, I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth; 'tis like it round the sapling, and spoils the growth of the tree.

[Exeunt]

ACT III.—SCENE I.

SIR PETER'S House.

Enter SIR PETER, SIR OLIVER, and ROWLEY.

Sir P. Well, well, we'll see this man first, and then have our wine afterwards.—But, Rowley, I don't see the rest of your scheme.

Rowl. Why, sir, this Mr Stanley was a near relation of their mother's, and formerly an eminent merchant at Dublin—he failed in trade, and is greatly reduced; he has applied by letter to Mr Surface and Charles for assistance—him—from the former of whom he has received nothing but fair promises; while Charles, in the midst of his own distresses, is at present endeavouring to raise a sum of money, part of which I know he intends for the use of Mr Stanley.

Sir O. Ay—he's my brother's son.

Rowl. Now, sir, we propose, that Sir Oliver shall visit him both in the character of Mr Stanley; as I have informed them he has obtained leave of his creditors to wait on his friends in person—and in the younger, believe me, sick day you'll find one, who, in the midst of dissipation and extravagance, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it, ‘A year for pity, and a hand open as day, for melting charity.’

Sir P. What signifies his open hand and purse, if he has nothing to give. But where is this person you were speaking of?

Rowl. Below, sir, waiting your commands.—You must know, Sir Oliver, this is a friendly Jew: one who, to do him justice, has done every thing in his power to assist Charles.—Who waits—[Enter SERVANT.]—desire Mr Moses to walk up.

[Exit SERVANT.]

Sir P. But, how are you sure he'll speak truth?

Rowl. Why, sir, I have persuaded him, there's no prospect of his being paid several sums he has advanced for Charles, but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is in town; therefore you may depend on his being faithful to his interest—Oh! here he comes, the honest Israelite.

Enter Moses.

Sir Oliver, this is Mr Moses,—Mr Moses, this is Sir Oliver.

Sir O. I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew, Charles.

Mos. Yes, Sir Oliver,—I have done all I could for him—but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

Sir O. That was unlucky, truly, for you had no opportunity of shewing your talent.

Mos. None at all; I had not the pleasure of knowing his distresses, 'till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

Sir O. Unfortunate indeed! but I suppose you have done all in your power for him?

Mos. Yes, he knows that.—This very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will advance him some monies.

Sir P. What! will a person that Charles has never borrowed money of before, lend him any in his present circumstances?

Mos. Yes.

Sir O. What is the gentleman's name?

Mos. Mr Premium, of Crutched Friars, formerly a broker.

Sir P. Does he know Mr Premium?

Mos. Not at all.

Sir P. A thought strikes me.—Suppose, Sir Oliver, you was to visit him in that character; 'twill be much better than the romantic one of an old relation; you will then have an opportunity of seeing Charles in all his glory.

Sir O. Egad, I like that idea better than the other, and then I may visit Joseph afterwards as old Stanley.

Rowl. Gentleimen, this is taking Charles rather unawares; but, Moses, you understand Sir Oliver, and I dare say will be faithful.

Mos. You may depend upon me.—This is very near the time I was to have gone.

Sir O. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses.—But hold—I had forgot one thing—how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?

Mos. There is no need—the principal is a Christian.

Sir O. Is he! I am very sorry for it.—But then again, am I not too smartly dressed to look like a money-lender?

Sir P. Not at all—it would not be out of character if you went in your chariot; would it, Moses?

Mos. Not in the least.

Sir O. Well, but how must I talk? There's certainly some cant of usury, or mode of treating, that I ought to know.

Sir P. As I take it, Sir Oliver, the great point is to be exorbitant in your demands.—eh, Moses?

Mos. Yes, dat is very great point.

Sir O. I'll answer for't I'll not be wanting in that; eight or ten per cent. on the loan at least.

Mos. Oh! if you ask him no more as dat you'll be discovered immediately.

Sir O. Hey, what the plague—how much then?

Mos. That depends upon the circumstances—if he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent. but if you find him in great distress, and he wants money very bad—you must ask double.

Sir P. Upon my word, Sir Oliver—Mr Premium, I mean—'tis a very pretty trade you're learning.

Sir O. Truly, I think so, and not unprofitable.

Mos. Then, you know, you have not the money yourself, but are forced to borrow it of a friend.

Sir O. O! I borrow it for him of a friend—do I?

Mos. Yes, and your friend's an unconscionable dog—but you can't help dat.

Sir O. Oh! my friend's an unconscionable dog—is he?

Mos. And then he himself has not the monies by him, but is forced to sell stock at a great loss.—

Sir O. Well, really, that's very kind of him.

Sir P. But harkye, Moses, if Sir Oliver was to rail a little at the annuity-bill, don't you think it would have a good effect?

Mos. Very much.

Rowl. And lament that a young man must now come to ears of discretion, before he has it in his power to ruin himself.

Mos. Ay! a great pity.

Sir P. Yes, and abuse the public for allowing merit to bill, whose only object was to preserve youth and innocence from the rapacious gripe of usury, and to give the

young heir an opportunity of enjoying his fortune, without being ruined by coming into possession.

Sir O. So—so—Moses shall give me farther instructions as we go together.

Sir P. You'll scarce have time to learn your trade, for Charles lives but hard by.

Sir O. Oh ! never fear—my tutor appears so able, that though Sir Charles lived in the next street, it must my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I have turned the corner. [Exit SIR OLIVER and MOSES.]

Sir P. So, Rowley, you should have been partial, and given Charles notice of our plot.

Rowl. No, indeed, Sir Peter.

Sir P. Well, I see Maria coming ; I want to have some talk with her. [Exit ROWLEY.]

Enter MARIA.

So, Maria, what, is Mr Surface come home with you ?

Mar. No, sir, he was engaged.

Sir P. Maria, I wish you were more sensible to his excellent qualities—does not every time you are in his company convince you of the merit of that amiable young man ?

Mar. You know, Sir Peter, I have often told you, that of all the men who have paid me a particular attention there is not one I would not sooner prefer than Mr Surface.

Sir P. Ay, ay, this blindness to his merit proceeds from your attachment to that profligate brother of his.

Mar. This is unkind ; you know, at your request, I have forbore to see or correspond with him, as I have long been convinced he is unworthy my regard ; but while my reason condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his misfortunes.

Sir P. Ay ! you had best resolve to think of him no more, but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

Mar. Never to his brother.

Sir P. Have a care, Maria, I have not made you know what the authority of a guardian is, don't force me to exert it.

Mar. I know, that for a short time I am to obey you, my father—but must cease to think you so, when you would compel me to be miserable. [Exit in tears.]

Sir P. Sure never was a man plagued as I am ; I have not been married above three weeks, before her father, a hale, hearty man, died—on purpose to plague me with it.

with care of his daughter; but here comes my helpmate, she seems in mighty good humour: I wish I could tease her into loving me a little.

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

de, for *Lady T.* What's the matter, Sir Peter? What have you done to Maria? It is not fair to quarrel, and I not by.

le, that *Sir P.* Ah! Lady Teazle, it is in your power to put me into a good humour at any time.

Lady T. Is it? I am glad of it—for I want to be in a monstrous good humour now; come, do be good-humoured, and let me have two hundred pounds.

Sir P. What the plague! can't I be in good humour without paying for it—but look always thus, and you shall want for nothing. [*Pulls out a pocket-book.*]—There, there's two hundred pounds for you [*Going to kiss her.*] now seal me bond for payment.

Lady T. No; my note of hand will do as well.

[*Giving her hand.*]

Sir P. Well, well, I must be satisfied with that—you shan't much longer reproach me for not having made a proper settlement—I intend shortly to surprise you.

Lady T. Do you? you can't think, Sir Peter, how good humour becomes you: now you look just as you did before I married you.

Sir P. Do I, indeed?

Lady T. Don't you remember, when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and asked me if I could like an old fellow, who would deny me nothing?

Sir P. Ay, and you were so attentive and obliging to me then.

Lady T. Ay, to be sure I was, and used to take your part against all my acquaintance; and when my cousin Sophy used to laugh at me, for thinking of marrying a man old enough to be my father, and call you an ugly, stiff, formal, old bachelor, I contradicted her, and said I did not think you so ugly by any means, and that I dar'd say you would make a good sort of a husband.

Sir P. That was very kind of you.—Well, and you were not mistaken, you have found it so, have you not?

But shall we always live thus happy?

Lady T. With all my heart—I'm—I don't care how soon

young heir an opportunity of enjoying his fortune, without being ruined by coming into possession.

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Enter LADY TEAZLE.

Lady T. What's the matter, Sir Peter? What have you done to Maria? It is not fair to quarrel, and I not by.

Sir P. Ah! Lady Teazle, it is in your power to put me into a good humour at any time.

Lady T. Is it? I am glad of it—for I want to be in a monstrous good humour now; come, do be good-humoured, and let me have two hundred pounds.

Sir P. What the plague! can't I be in good humour without paying for it—but look always thus, and you shall want for nothing. [Pulls out a pocket-book.]—There, there's two hundred pounds for you [Going to kiss her.] now seal me bond for payment.

Lady T. No; my note of hand will do as well.

[*Giving her hand.*]

Sir P. Well, well, I must be satisfied with that—you shan't much longer reproach me for not having made a proper settlement—I intend shortly to surprise you.

Lady T. Do you? you can't think, Sir Peter, how good humour becomes you: now you look just as you did before I married you.

Sir P. Do I, indeed?

Lady T. Don't you remember, when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and asked me if I could like an old fellow, who would deny me nothing?

Sir P. Ay, and you were so attentive and obliging to me then.

Lady T. Ay, to be sure I was, and used to take your part against all my acquaintance; and when my cousin Sophy used to laugh at me, for thinking of marrying a man old enough to be my father, and call you an ugly, stiff, formal, old bachelor, I contradicted her, and said I did not think you so ugly by any means, and that I dar'd say you would make a good sort of a husband.

Sir P. That was very kind of you.—Well, and you were not mistaken, you have found it so, have you not?

But shall we always live thus happy?

Lady T. With all my heart—I'm—I don't care how soon

we leave off quarrelling—provided you will own you are tired first.

Sir P. With all my heart.

Lady T. Then we shall be as happy as the day is long, and never, never—never quarrel more.

Sir P. Never—never—never—never—and let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

Lady T. Ay!

Sir P. But, my dear Lady Teazle—my love—indeed you must keep a strict watch over your temper—for, you know, my dear, that in all our disputes and quarrels, you always begin first.

Lady T. No, no, Sir Peter, my dear, 'tis always you that begins.

Sir P. No, no,—no such thing.

Lady T. Have a care, this is not the way to live happy, if you fly out thus.

Sir P. No, no—'tis you.

Lady T. No—'tis you.

Sir P. Zounds! I say 'tis you.

Lady T. Lord! I never saw such a man in my life—just what my cousin Sophy told me.

Sir P. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, saucy, impudent minx.

Lady T. You are a very great bear, I am sure, to abuse my relations.

Sir P. But I am very well served for marrying you—a pert, forward, rural coquette; who had refused half the honest 'quires in the country.

Lady T. I am sure I was a great fool for marrying you—a stiff, crop, dangling old bachelor, who was unmarried at fifty because nobody would have him.

Sir P. You was very glad to have me—you never had such an offer.

Lady T. Oh, yes, I had—there was Sir Tivey Terrier, who every body said would be a better match; for his estate was full as good as your's, and—he has broke his neck since we were married.

Sir P. Very well—very well, madam—you're an ungrateful woman; and may plagues light on me, if I ever try to be friends with you again—you shall have a separate maintenance.

are *Lady T.* By all means, a separate maintenance.

Sir P. Very well, madam—Oh, very well. Ay, madam, and I believe the stories of you and Charles—of you and long, Charles, madam—were not without foundation.

Lady T. Take care, Sir Peter; take care what you say, I wont be suspected without a cause, I promise you.

Sir P. A divorce.

Lady T. Ay, a divorce.

Sir P. Ay, zounds! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors.

Lady T. Well, Sir Peter, I see you are going to be in a passion, so I'll leave you, and when you are come properly to your temper, we shall be the happiest couple in the world, and never—never—quarrel more. Ha, ha, ha! [Exit.

Sir P. What the devil! can't I make her angry neither. I'll after her—Zounds—she must not presume to keep her temper.—No, no—she may break my heart—but damn—I'm determined she shan't keep her temper. [Exit.

SCENE II.

CHARLES's House.—Enter TRIP, SIR OLIVER, and MOSES.

Trip. This way, gentlemen, this way—Moses, what's the gentleman's name?

Sir O. Mr Moses, what's my name? [Aside.

Mos. Mr Premium—

Trip. Oh, Mr Premium—very well. [Exit.

Sir O. To judge by the servant one would not imagine the master was ruined.—Sure this was my brother's house.

Mos. Yes, sir,—Mr Charles bought it of Mr Joseph, with furniture, pictures, &c. just as the old gentleman left it.—Sir Peter thought it a great piece of extravagance in him.

Sir O. In my mind, the other's economy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half.

* Enter TRIP.

Trip. Gentlemen, my master is very sorry, he has company at present, and cannot see you.

Sir O. If he knew who it was that wanted to see him, perhaps he would not have sent such a message.

Trip. Oh! yes, I told him who it was—I did not forget my little Premium, no, no.

Sir O. Very well, sir; and pray what may your name be?
Trip. Trip, sir; at your service.

Sir O. Very well, Mr Trip—you have a pleasant seat of a place here, I guess.

Trip. Pretty well—There are four of us, who pass our time agreeable enough.—Our wages, indeed, are but small, and sometimes a little in arrear.—We have but fifty guineas a year, and find our own bags and bouquets.

Sir O. Bags and bouquets!—Halters and bastinadoes!

Trip. Oh, Moses, hark ye, did you get that little bill discounted for me?

Sir O. Wants to raise money too!—Mercy on me! He has distresses, I warrant, like a lord, and affects creditors and duns.

[Asia]

Mos. 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr Trip.

[Gives the note]

Trip. No! why, I thought when my friend Brush had set his mark on it, it was as good as cash.

Mos. No, indeed, it would not do.

Trip. Perhaps you could get it done by way of annuity.

Sir O. An annuity!—a footman raise money by annuity!—Well said, luxury, egad!

[Asia]

Mos. Well, but you may ensure your place.

Trip. Oh! I'll ensure my life if you please.

Sir O. That's more than I would your neck.

[Asia]

Trip. Well, but I should like to have it done before the damn'd register takes place; one would not wish to have one's name made public.

Mos. No, certainly.—But is there nothing you could deposit.

Trip. Why, there's none of my master's cloaths will fall very soon, I believe! but I can give a mortgage on some of his winter suits, with equity of redemption before Christmas—or a *post obit* on his blue and silver. Now these, with a few pair of point-ruffles, by way of security—[Bell rings.]—coming, coming.—Gentlemen, if you walk this way, perhaps I may introduce you now.—Mos' don't forget the annuity—I'll insure my place, my little fellow.

Sir O. If the man is the shadow of the master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed.

[Exit]

same book CHARLES, CARELESS, SIR TOBY, and GENTLEMEN, discovered drinking.

sant so Char. Ha, ha, ha,—'Fore Heaven, you are in the right—the degeneracy of the age is astonishing : there are many who pass our acquaintance, who are men of wit, genius, and are but spirit, but then they won't drink.

but for Care. True, Charles ; they sink into the more substantial luxuries of the table, and quite neglect their bottle.

nadoes Char. Right—besides society suffers by it ; for, instead little bit of the mirth and humour that used to mantle over a bottle of burgundy, their conversation is as insipid as the Spanish water they drink, which has all the tartness of champaigne, sets credit without its spirit or flavour.

[Aside] Sir T. But what will you say to those who prefer play to the bottle ?—There's Harry, Dick, and Careless himself, who are under a hazard regimen.

rush ha Care. Psha ! no such thing—What, could you train a horse for the course by keeping him from corn ? Let me throw upon a bottle of burgundy, and I never lose ; at least I never feel my loss, and that's the same thing.

by ann 1st Gent. True ; besides, 'tis wine determines if a man

[Aside] be really in love.

Char. So it is—fill up a dozen of bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats at the top is the girl that has bewitched you.

before th Care. But come, Charles, you have not given us your real favourite.

you cou Char. Faith, I have withheld her only in compassion to you ; if I give her, you must toast a round of her peers, which is impossible [Sighs.] on earth.

paths w Char. We'll toast some heathen deity, or celestial goddess, to match her.

mortgag Char. Why, then bumpers—bumpers all round—Here's Maria—Maria— [Sighs.]

on befo 1st Gent. Maria—psha, give us her surname.

er. No if you —Most Char. Psha—Hang her surname, that's too formal to be registered in love's calendar.

my lit 1st Gent. Maria then—here's Maria.

er, thi Sir T. Maria—come, here's Maria.

[Exebe Char. Come, Sir Toby, have a care ; you must give a beauty superlative.

Sir T. Then I'll give you—Here's—

Care. Nay, never hesitate:—but Sir Toby has got a song that will excuse him.

Omnès. The song—the song.

SONG.

Here's to the maiden of blushing fifteen,
Now to the widow of fifty!

Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean,
And then to the housewife that's thrifty.

Let the toast pass, drink to the lass,
I warrant she'll find an excuse for the glass.

Here's to the charmer, whose dimples we prize,
Now to the damsel with none, sir;

Here's to the maid with a pair of blue eyes,
And now to the nymph with but one, sir.

Let the toast pass, &c.

Here's to the maid with her bosom of snow,
Now to her that's as brown as a berry;

Here's to the wife with her face full of woe,
And now to the damsel that's merry.

Let the toast pass, &c.

For let them be clumsy, or let them be slim,
Young or ancient, I care not a feather;

So fill us a bumper quite up the brim,
And e'en let us toast them together.

Let the toast pass, &c.

TRIP enters, and whispers CHARLES.

Char. Gentlemen, I must beg your pardon; [Rising.] I must leave you upon business—Careless, take the chair.

Care. What, this is some wench, but we won't lose you for her.

Char. No, upon my honour—it is only a Jew and a broker, that are come by appointment.

Care. A Jew and a broker! we'll have them in.

Char. Then desire Mr Moses to walk in.

Trip. And little Premium too, sir?

Care. Ay, Moses and Premium. [Exit TRIP.] Charles we'll give the rascals some generous burgundy.

Char. No, hang it—wine but draws forth the natural qualities of a man's heart, and to make them drink, would only be to wet their knavery.

Enter SIR OLIVER and MOSES.

Walk in, gentlemen, walk in; Trip, give chairs; sit down, Mr Premium; sit down, Moses. Glasses, Trip; come, Moses, I'll give you a sentiment.—“Here's success to usury.”—Moses, fill the gentleman a bumper.

Mos. “Here's success to usury.”

Care. True, Charles, usury is industry, and deserves to succeed.

Sir O. Then, here's “All the success it deserves.”

Care. O, damme, sir, that won't do; you demur to the last, and shall drink it in a pint bumper at least.

Mos. Oh, pray, sir, consider, Mr Premium is a gentleman.

Care. And therefore loves good wine, and I'll see justice done to the bottle.—Fill, Moses, a quart.

Char. Pray, consider, gentlemen, Mr Premium's a stranger.

Sir O. I wish I was out of their company. [Aside.]

Care. Come along, my boys, if they won't drink with us, we'll not stay with them: the dice are in the next room. You'll settle your business, Charles, and come to us.

Char. Ay, ay,—But, Careless, you must be ready, perhaps I may have occasion for you.

Care. Ay, ay, bill, bond, or annuity, 'tis all the same to me. [Exit with the rest.]

Mos. Mr Premium is a gentleman of the strictest honour and secrecy, and always performs what he undertakes.

Mr Premium, this is— [Formally.]

Char. Psha! hold your tongue—My friend, Moses, sir, is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression—I suppose you all cut the matter very short—I am an extravagant young fellow, that wants to borrow money; and you, as I and all the world know it, are a prudent old fellow, who has got money to lend—I am such a fool as to give fifty per cent. rather than without it, and you, I suppose, are rogue enough to take an hundred if you can get it. And now we understand one another, and may proceed to business without further ceremony.

Sir O. Exceeding frank, upon my word—I see you are naturally a man of compliment.

Char. No, sir.

Sir O. Sir, I like you the better for it—however, you

are mistaken in one thing ; I have no money to lend, b
I believe I could procure you some from a friend ; b
then he is a damn'd unconscionable dog ; is he not, Moses

Mos. But you can't help that.

Sir O. And then, he has not the money by him, b
must sell stock at a great loss. Must he not, Moses ?

Mos. Yes, indeed—You know I always speak t
truth, and scorn to tell a lie.

Char. Ay, those who speak the truth usually do—An
sir, I must pay the difference, I suppose.—Why, look y
Mr Premium, I know that money is not to be had wit
out paying for it.

Sir O. Well—but what security could you give ?—Yo
have not any land, I suppose ?

Char. Not a mole-hill, nor a twig, but what grows
bow-pots, out at the window.

Sir O. Nor any stock, I presume.

Char. Noné but live stock, and they are only a fe
pointers and ponies.—But pray, sir, are you acquaint
with any of my connections ?

Sir O. To say the truth, I am.

Char. Then you must have heard that I have a rich
uncle in India, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have t
greatest expectations.

Sir O. That you have a wealthy uncle, I have hear
but how your expectations will turn out, is more, I b
lieve, than you can tell.

Char. Oh yes, I'm told I am a monstrous favourite, a
that he intends leaving me every thing.

Sir O. Indeed ! this is the first time I have heard of

Char. Yes, yes, he intends making me his heir—D
he not, Moses ?

Mos. Oh yes, I'll take my oath of that.

Sir O. Egad, they'll persuade me presently that I'm
Bengal. (As)

Char. Now, what I propose, Mr Premium, is to g
you a *post obit* on my uncle's life. Though, indeed,
uncle Noll has been very kind to me, and, upon my s
I shall be sincerely sorry to hear any thing has happen
to him.

Sir O. Not more than I should, I assure you. But
bond you mention, happens to be the worst security

nd, he could offer me, for I might live to an hundred, and never
nd ; he recover the principal.

Moses *Char.* Oh, yes, you would ; for the moment he dies, you
come upon me for the money.

im, b *Sir O.* Then I believe I would be the most unwelcome
ses ? dun you ever had in your life.

peak t *Char.* What, you are afraid, my little Premium, that
my uncle has too good a life.

o—An *Sir O.* No, indeed, I am not ; though I have heard he's
look yas hale and hearty as any man of his years in Christen-
ad with dom.

e ?—Y *Char.* Oh, there you are misinformed. No, no, poor
uncle Oliver ! he breaks apace. The climate, sir, has
hurt his constitution, and I'm told he's so much altered of
grows late, that his nearest relations don't know him.

lly a f *Sir O.* No, ha, ha, ha ! so much altered of late, that
his nearest relations would not know him. Ha, ha, ha !
equaint that's droll, egad.

a rich *Char.* What, you are pleased to hear that he is on the
I have t decline, my little Premium ?

ave hear *Sir O.* No, I am not—no, no, no.

ore, I *Char.* Yes, you are, for it mends your chance.

heard of *Sir O.* But I am told, Sir Oliver is coming over—Nay,
heir—D some say he is actually arrived.

that I'm *Char.* Oh, there you are misinformed again—No—no
is to g such thing—he is this moment at Bengal. What ! I must
indeed, I certainly know better than you.

on my s *Sir O.* Very true, as you say, you must know better
as happen than I ; though I have it from very good authority—Have
not, Moses ?

Mos. Most undoubtedly.

Sir O. But, sir, as I understand you want a few hun-
dreds immediately, is there nothing that you would dis-
pose of ?

(As *Char.* How do you mean ?

Sir O. For instance, now ; I have heard your father left
behind him a great quantity of massy old plate.

Char. Yes, but that's gone long ago—Moses can inform
you how, better than I can.

Sir O. Good luck ! all the family race cups, and corpo-
ration bowls gone ! [Aside.] It was also supposed, that his
library was one of the most valuable and complete.

Char. Much too large and valuable for a private gentleman; for my part, I was always of a communicative disposition, and thought it a pity to keep so much knowledge to myself.

Sir O. Mercy on me! knowledge that has run in the family like a heir-loom. [Aside.] And pray, how may they have been disposed of?

Char. O! you must ask the auctioneer that—I don't believe even Moses can direct you there.

Mos. No—I never meddle with books.

Sir O. The profligate! [Aside.] And is there nothing you can dispose of?

Char. Nothing—unless you have a taste for old family pictures, I have a whole room full of ancestors above stairs.

Sir O. Why, sure you would not sell your relations—

Char. Every soul of them to the best bidder.

Sir O. Not your great uncles and aunts.

Char. Ay, and my grandfathers and grandmothers.

Sir O. I'll never forgive him this. [Aside.] Why what!—do you take me for Shylock in the play, to raise money from me on your own flesh and blood!

Char. Nay, don't be in a passion, my little Premium; what is it to you, if you have your money's worth?

Sir O. That's very true, as you say—Well, well, I believe I can dispose of the family canvas. I'll never forgive him this. [Aside]

Enter CARELESS.

Care. Come, Charles, what the devil are you doing so long with the broker?—we are waiting for you.

Char. Oh, Careless, you are just come in time, we are to have a sale above stairs—I am going to sell all my ancestors to little Premium.

Care. Burn your ancestors!

Char. No, no, he may do that afterwards, if he will—but, Careless, you shall be auctioneer.

Care. With all my heart—I can handle a hammer as well as a dice-box—a-going—a-going.

Char. Bravo!—And, Moses, you shall be appraiser, we want one.

Mos. Yes, I'll be the appraiser.

Sir O. Oh, the profligate!

Char. But what's the matter, my little Premium? You don't seem to relish this business.

Sir O. [Affecting to laugh.] Oh yes, I do vastly, ha, ha, ha ! I—Oh, the prodigal ! [Aside.]

Char. Very true ; for when a man wants money, who the devil can he make free with, if he can't with his own relations. [Exit.]

Sir O. [Following.] I'll never forgive him.

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

Enter CHARLES, SIR OLIVER, CARELESS, and MOSES.

Char. Walk in, gentlemen, walk in ; here they are—the family of the Surfaces up to the Conquest.

Sir O. And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

Char. Aye, there they are, done in the true spirit and style of portrait-painting, and not like your modern Raphaels, who will make your picture independent of yourself ;—no, the great merit of these are, the inveterate likeness they bear to the originals. All stiff and awkward as they were, and like nothing in human nature besides.

Sir O. Oh, we shall never see such figures of men again.

Char. I hope not—You see, Mr Premium, what a domestic man I am ; here I sit of an evening surrounded by my ancestors.—But come, let us proceed to business—To [Aside] our pulpit, Mr Auctioneer.—Oh, here's a great chair of my father's that seems fit for nothing else.

Care. The very thing, but what shall I do for a hammer, Charles ? an auctioneer is nothing without a hammer.

Char. A hammer ! [Looking round.] Let's see, what have we here—Sir Richard, heir to Robert—a genealogy in full, egad.—Here, Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany—here's the family-tree, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

Sir O. What an unnatural rogue he is ! —An expert *facto parricide.* [Aside.]

Care. 'Gad, Charles, this is lucky ; it will not only serve for a hammer, but a catalogue too, if we should want it.

Char. True—Come, here's my great uncle, Sir Richard avelin, a marvellous good general in his day : he served all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet.—He is not dress-

ed out in feathers like our modern captains, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be——What say you, Mr Premium ?

Mos. Mr Premium would have you speak.

Char. Why, you shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's cheap enough for a staff-officer.

Sir O. Heaven deliver me ! his great uncle, Sir Richard, going for ten pounds ! [Aside.]—Well, sir, I take him at that price.

Char. Careless, knock down my uncle, Richard.

Care. Going, going—a-going—gone.

Char. This is a maiden-sister of his, my great aunt, Deborah, done by Kneller ; thought to be one of his best pictures, and esteemed a very formidable likeness. There she sits, as a shepherdess feeding her flock—You shall have her for five pounds ten. I'm sure the sheep are worth the money.

Sir O. Ah, poor aunt Deborah, a woman that set such a value on herself, going for five pounds ten ! [Aside.]—Well, sir, she's mine.

Char. Knock down my aunt Deborah, Careless.

Care. Gone.

Char. Here are two cousins of theirs.—Moses, these pictures were done when beaus wore periwigs, and ladies their own hair.

Sir O. Yes, truly—head-dresses seem to have been somewhat lower in those days.

Char. Here's a grandfather of my mother's, a judge well known on the western circuit. What will you give for him ?

Mos. Four guineas.

Char. Four guineas ! why you don't bid the price of his wig. Premium, you have more respect for the wool-sack do let me knock him down at fifteen.

Sir O. By all means.

Care. Gone.

Char. Here are two brothers, William and Walter Bunt, Esqs. both members of parliament, and great speakers : and what's very extraordinary, I believe this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

Sir O. That's very extraordinary indeed ;—I'll take them at your own price, for the honour of parliament.

Char. Well said, Premium.

Care. I'll knock them down at forty pounds—going—
going—gone.

Char. Here's a jolly portly fellow; I don't know what
relation he is to the family; but he was formerly mayor
of Norwich—let's knock him down at eight pounds.

Sir O. No, I think six is enough for a mayor!

Char. Come, make it guineas, and I'll throw you the
two aldermen into the bargain.

Sir O. They are mine.

Char. Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen.

Care. Gone.

Char. But hang it, we shall be all day at this rate;
come, come, give me three hundred pounds, and take all
on this side the room in a lump.—That will be the best
way.

Sir O. Well, well, any thing to accommodate you; they
are mine—But there is one portrait you have always pass-
ed over.

Care. What, that ill-looking fellow over the settee?

Sir O. Yes, sir, 'tis that I mean—but I don't think him
so ill-looking a fellow by any means.

Char. That's the picture of my uncle, Sir Oliver; be-
fore he went abroad it was done, and is esteemed a very
great likeness.

Care. That your uncle, Sir Oliver! Then, in my op-
inion you never will be friends, for he is one of the most
stern-looking rogues I ever beheld; he has an unforgiving
eye, and a damn'd disinheriting countenance. Don't you
think so, little Premium?

Sir O. Upon my soul, I do not, sir; I think it is as
honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive—
but I suppose your uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the
umber.

Char. No, hang it, the old gentleman has been very
good to me, and I'll keep his picture as long as I have a
room to put it in.

Sir O. The rogue's my nephew after all—I forgive him
very thing. [Aside.] But, sir, I have somehow taken a
ancy to that picture.

Char. I am sorry for it, Master Broker, for you certain-

ly won't have it.—What the devil, have you not got enough of the family?

Sir O. I forgive him every thing. [Aside.] Look ye, sir, I am a strange sort of a fellow, and when I take a whim in my head, I don't value money : I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Char. Prythee, don't be troublesome—I tell you I won't part with it, and there's an end on't.

Sir O. How like his father the dog is—I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw so strong a resemblance. [Aside.]—Well, sir, here's a draught for your sum.

[Giving a bill]

Char. Why this bill is for eight hundred pounds.

Sir O. You'll not let Sir Oliver go then ?

Char. No, I tell you once for all.

Sir O. Then never mind the difference, we'll balance that some other time—But give me your hand; [Presses it.] you are a damn'd honest fellow, Charles.—O Lord ! I beg pardon, sir, for being so free.—Come along, Moses.

Char. But hark ye, Premium, you'll provide good lodg ing for these gentlemen. [Going]

Sir O. I'll send for 'em in a day or two.

Char. And pray let it be a genteel conveyance, for I assure you most of 'em have been used to ride in their own carriages.

Sir O. I will for all but Oliver.

Char. For all but the honest little Nabob.

Sir O. You are fixed in that ?

Char. Peremptorily.

Sir O. Ah, the dear extravagant dog ! [Aside.]—Good day, sir. Come, Moses—now let me see who dares call him profligate. [Exit with Moses]

Care. Why, Charles, this is the very prince of brokers.

Char. I wonder where Moses got acquainted with so honest a fellow.—But, Careless, step into the company; I'll wait on you presently, I see old Rowley coming.

Care. But hark ye, Charles, don't let that fellow make you part with any of that money to discharge musty old debts. Tradesmen, you know, are the most impertinent people in the world.

Char. True, and paying them would be the encouraging them.

enough Care. Well, settle your business, and make what haste you can.

ook ye, Char. Eight hundred pounds ! Two thirds of this are take a nine by right—Five hundred and thirty odd pounds !— you as Gad, I never knew till now, that my ancestors were such valuable acquaintances—Kind ladies and gentlemen, I am you I your very much obliged, and most grateful humble servant.

[*Bowing to the Pictures.*

Enter ROWLEY.

Ah ! Rowley, you are just come in time to take leave of our old acquaintance.

Rowl. Yes, sir, I heard they were going.—But how can you support such spirits under all your misfortunes ?

Char. That's the cause, Master Rowley, my misfortunes are so many, that I can't afford to part with my spirits.

Rowl. And can you really take leave of your ancestors with so much unconcern ?

Char. Unconcern ! what, I suppose you are surprised that I am not more sorrowful at losing the company of so many worthy friends. It is very distressing to be sure ; but you see they never move a muscle, then why the devil should I ?

Rowl. Ah ! dear, Charles !

Char. But come, I have no time for trifling :—here, take this bill, and get it changed, and carry an hundred pounds to poor Stanley, or we shall have somebody call that has a better right to it.

Rowl. Ah, sir, I wish you would remember the proverb—

Char. Be just before you are generous—Why, so I could if I could, but justice is an old, lame, hobbling belam, and I can't get her to keep pace with generosity for the soul of me.

Rowl. Do, dear sir, reflect.

Char. That's very true, as you say—but, Rowley, while I have, by Heavens, I'll give—so damn your mosity, and away to old Stanley with the moneys. [Exeunt.

Enter SIR OLIVER and MOSES.

Mos. Well, I think, as Sir Peter said, you have seen Charles in all his glory—'tis a great pity he is so extravagant.

Sir O. True,—but he would not sell my picture.—

Mos. And loves wine and women so much.

Sir O. But he would not sell my picture.—

Mos. And games so deep.

Sir O. But he would not sell my picture.—Oh, here comes Rowley.

Enter Rowley.

Rowl. Well, sir, I find you have made a purchase.

Sir O. Yes, our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

Rowl. And he has commissioned me to return you a hundred pounds of the purchase-money, but under your fictitious character of old Stanley. I saw a taylor and two hosiers dancing attendance, who, I know, will go unpaid and the hundred pounds would satisfy them.

Sir O. Well, well, I'll pay his debts and his benevolence too.—But now, I'm no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

Enter Trip.

Trip. Gentlemen, I'm sorry I was not in the way to shew you out. Hark ye, Moses. [Exit with Moses]

Sir O. There's a fellow now—will you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming, and wanted to raise money before he got to his master.

Rowl. Indeed!

Sir O. And now they are planning an annuity business—Oh, Master Rowley, in my time, servants were content with the follies of their masters, when they were wore little threadbare; but now they have their vices, like their birth-day clothes, with the gloss on. [Exit]

SCENE II.

The Apartment of JOSEPH SURFACE.

Enter JOSEPH and a SERVANT.

Jos. No letter from Lady Teazle?

Serv. No, sir.

Jos. I wonder she did not write if she could not come. I hope Sir Peter does not suspect me—But Charles' dissipation and extravagance are great points in my favour—[Knocking at the door.]—See if it is her.

Serv. 'Tis Lady Teazle, sir; but she always orders her chair to the milliner's in the next street.

Jos. Then draw that screen—my opposite neighbour is a maiden lady of so curious a temper—You need not wait.
[Exit SERVANT.]—My Lady Teazle, I'm afraid, begins to suspect my attachment to Maria; but she must not be acquainted with that secret till I have her more in my power.

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

Lady T. What, sentiment in soliloquy!—Have you been very impatient now?—Nay, you look so grave—I assure you I came as soon as I could.

Jos. Oh, madam, punctuality is a species of constancy—a very unfashionable custom among ladies.

Lady T. Nay, you wrong me; I'm sure you'd pity me if you knew my situation—[Both sit.]—Sir Peter really grows so peevish, and so ill-natured, there's no enduring him: and then, to suspect me with Charles—

Jos. I'm glad my scandalous friends keep up that report.

[Aside.]

Lady T. For my part, I wish Sir Peter to let Maria carry him—wouldn't you, Mr Surface?

Jos. Indeed I would not—[Aside.]—Oh, to be sure; and then my dear Lady Teazle would be convinced how groundless her suspicions were, of my having any thoughts of the silly girl.

Lady T. Then there's my friend, Lady Sneerwell, has propagated malicious stories about me—and, what's very provoking, all without the least foundation.

Jos. Ah! there's the mischief—for when a scandalous story is believed against one, there's no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

Lady T. And to be continually censured and suspected, when I know the integrity of my own heart—it would almost prompt me to give him some grounds for it.

Jos. Certainly—for when a husband grows suspicious, and withdraws his confidence from his wife, it then becomes a part of her duty to endeavour to out-wit him—you owe it to the natural privilege of your sex.

Lady T. Indeed!

Jos. O yes, for your husband should never be deceived by you, and you ought to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

Lady T. This is the newest doctrine,

Jos. Very wholesome, believe me.

Lady T. So the only way to prevent his suspicions, to give him cause for them.

Jos. Certainly.

Lady T. But then the consciousness of my innocence

Jos. Ah, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis that consciousness your innocence that ruins you. What is it that makes you imprudent in your conduct, and careless of the cures of the world? The consciousness of your innocence. What is it that makes you regardless of forms, and inattentive to your husband's peace? Why the consciousness of your innocence. Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you could only be prevailed upon to make a trifling *faux-pas*, you can't imagine how circumspect you would grow.

Lady T. Do you think so?

Jos. Depend upon it.—Your case at present, my dear Lady Teazle, resembles that of a person in a plethora; you are absolutely dying of too much health.

Lady T. Why, indeed, if my understanding could be convinced—

Jos. Your understanding!—Oh yes, your understanding should be convinced. Heaven forbid that I should persuade you to do any thing that you thought wrong. No, I have too much honour for that.

Lady T. Don't you think you may as well leave honour out of the question? [Both rise]

Jos. Ah! I see, Lady Teazle, the effects of your country education still remain.

Lady T. They do, indeed—and I begin to find myself imprudent; and if I should be brought to act wrong, would be sooner from Sir Peter's ill-treatment of me, than from your honourable logic, I assure you.

Jos. Then, by this hand, which is unworthy of—[Kneeling, a SERVANT enters.]—What do you want, you scoundrel?

Serv. I beg pardon, sir—I thought you would not chuse Sir Peter should come up.

Jos. Sir Peter!

Lady T. Sir Peter!—O, I'm undone!—What shall I do?—Hide me somewhere, good Mr Logic.

Jos. Here, here, behind this screen; [She runs behind the screen.] and now reach me a book. [Sits down and reads]

ictions,

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir P. Ay, there he is, ever improving himself.—Mr Surface, Mr Surface.

[*Affecting to gape.*] Oh, Sir Peter!—I rejoice to see you—I was got over a sleepy book here—I am vastly glad to see you—I thank you for this call—I believe we have not been here since I finished my library—Books, you know, are the only things I am a coxcomb in.

Sir P. Very pretty, indeed—why, even your screen is a source of knowledge—hung round with maps, I see.

Jos. Yes, I find great use in that screen.

Sir P. Yes, yes, so you must, when you want to find any thing in a hurry.

Jos. Yes, or to hide any thing in a hurry. [*Aside.*]

Sir P. But, my dear friend, I want to have some private talk with you.

Jos. You need not wait. [*Exit SERVANT.*]

Sir P. Pray sit down—[Both sit.]—My dear friend, I want to impart to you some of my distresses. In short, Miss Teazle's behaviour of late has given me very great uneasiness. She not only dissipates and destroys my fortune, but I have strong reasons to believe she has formed attachment elsewhere.

Jos. I am unhappy to hear it.

Sir P. I knew you would sympathise with me.

Jos. Believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would affect me—just as much as it does you.

Sir P. What a happiness to have a friend we can trust, even with our family secrets—Can't you guess who it is?

Jos. I hav'n't the most distant idea—it can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite?

Sir P. No, no.—What do you think of Charles?

Jos. My brother! impossible!—I can't think he would be capable of such baseness and ingratitude.

Sir P. Ah, the goodness of your own mind makes you slow to believe such villany.

Jos. Very true, Sir Peter.—The man who is conscious of the integrity of his own heart, is ever slow to credit another's baseness.

Sir P. And yet, that the son of my old friend should practise against the honour of my family.

Jos. Ay, there's the case, Sir Peter.—When ingratiating barbs the dart of injury, the wound feels doubly smart.

Sir P. What noble sentiments!—He never used a sentiment, ungrateful boy! that I have acted as guardian and who was brought up under my eye; and I never my life refused him—my advice.

Jos. I don't know, Sir Peter—he may be such a man—if it be so, he is no longer a brother of mine—I renounce him.—For the man who can break through the laws of hospitality, and seduce the wife or daughter of his friend, deserves to be branded as a pest to society.

Sir P. And yet, Joseph, if I was to make it public, should only be sneered and laughed at.

Jos. Why, that's very true.—No, no, you must make it public; people would talk—

Sir P. Talk! they'd say it was all my own fault; old doating bachelor, to marry a young giddy girl—The paragraph me in the newspapers, and make ballads on me!

Jos. And yet, Sir Peter, I can't think that my Lady Teazle's honour—

Sir P. Ah, my dear friend, what's her honour opposite against the flattery of a handsome young fellow? By Joseph, she has been upbraiding me of late, that I have not made her a settlement; and, I think, in our last quarrel, she told me she would not be sorry if I was dead. Now, I have brought draughts of two deeds for your usual; and she shall find, if I was to die, that I have been inattentive to her welfare while living. By the way, she will enjoy eight hundred pounds a-year during life; and by the other, the bulk of my fortune after death.

Jos. This conduct is truly generous—I wish it may corrupt my pupil. [As

Sir P. But I would not have her as yet acquainted with the least mark of my affection.

Jos. Nor I—if I could help it. [As

Sir P. And now I have unburthened myself to you, let us talk over your affair with Maria.

Jos. Not a syllable upon the subject now. [Alarmed] Some other time; I am too much affected by your affairs to think of my own. For the man who can think of his own happiness, while his friend is in distress, deserves to be hunted as a monster out of society.

Ingratitude. Sir P. I am sure of your affection for her.

Jos. Let me entreat you, Sir Peter——

smart. Sir P. And though you are so averse to Lady Teazle's
I used a s——n——ardian——owing it, I assure you she is not your enemy, and I am
I never——nsibly chagrined you have made no further progress.

Jos. Sir Peter, I must not hear you.—The man who——
Enter a SERVANT.]—What do you want, sirrah?

I renoun——aws of h——n——tleman; he says he knows you are at home, that Sir
friend, Peter is with you, and he must see you.

Jos. I am not at home.

t public. Sir P. Yes, yes, you shall be at home.

Jos. [After some hesitation.] Very well, let him come up.

I must — Sir P. Now, Joseph, I'll hide myself; and do you tax
a fault; m about the affair with Lady Teazle, and so draw the
erl—The c——ret from him.

Jos. O, fie, Sir Peter——what, join in a plot to trepan
ads on my brother!

Sir P. Oh aye, to serve your friend; besides, if he is
ur oppo——nocent, as you say he is, it will give him an opportunity
low? B——clear himself, and make me very happy. Hark, I hear
that I ha——m coming—where shall I go?—behind this screen—
r last qu——hat the devil! here has been one listener already, for
I was de——l swear I saw a petticoat.

Jos. [Affecting a laugh.] 'Tis very ridiculous—Ha, ha,
r your p——a ridiculous affair, indeed—ha, ha, ha——Hark ye,
I have — Sir Peter; [Pulling him aside.] though I hold a man of
By the c——trigue to be the most despicable character, yet you know
during — does not follow, that one is to be an absolute Joseph
e after — her. Hark ye, 'tis a little French milliner, that calls
h it ma——on me some times, and hearing you were coming, and
aving some character to lose, she slipped behind the
[As green. *

aainted w——Sir P. A French milliner! [Smiling.] cunning rogue!
oseph—Sly rogue!—But, zounds! she has overheard e——
[As f to you, — every thing that has passed about my wife.

Jos. O, never fear.—Take my word it will never go far-
ther for her.

Alarmed. Sir P. Won't it?

your affa——Jos. No, depend upon it.

think of — Sir P. Well, well, if it will go no farther—But—where
deserves all I hide myself?

Jos. Here, here, slip into the closet, and you may overhear every word.

[*SIR PETER goes in.*

Lady T. Can I steal away?

[*Peeping.*

Jos. Hush, hush, don't stir.

Sir P. Joseph, tax him home.

[*Peeping.*

Jos. In, in, my dear Sir Peter.

Lady T. Can't you lock the closet door?

Jos. Not a word—you'll be discovered.

Sir P. Joseph, don't spare him.

Jos. For Heaven's sake, lie close.—A pretty situation I am in, to part man and wife in this manner. [Aside]

Sir P. You're sure the little French milliner won't blab.

Enter CHARLES.

Char. Why, how now, brother, your fellow denied me, he said you were not at home. What, have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

Jos. Neither, brother, neither.

Char. But where's Sir Peter? I thought he was with you.

Jos. He was, brother; but hearing you was coming, he left the house.

Char. What, was the old fellow afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

Jos. Borrow! no, brother; but I am sorry to hear you have given that worthy man cause for great uneasiness.

Char. Yes, I am told I do that to a great many worthy men—but how do you mean, brother?

Jos. Why, he thinks you have endeavoured to alienate the affections of Lady Teazle.

Char. Who, I alienate the affections of Lady Teazle! Upon my word, he accuses me very unjustly. What, has the old gentleman found out that he has got a young wife? or, what is worse, has the lady found out that she has got an old husband?

Jos. For shame, brother.

Char. 'Tis true, I did once suspect her ladyship had a partiality for me, but upon my soul I never gave her the least encouragement; for you know my attachment was to Maria.

Jos. This will make Sir Peter extremely happy—But if she had a partiality for you, sure you would not have been base enough—

Char. Why, look ye, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonourable action ; but if a pretty woman should purposely throw herself in my way, and that pretty woman should happen to be married to a man old enough to be her father—

Jos. What then ?

Char. Why then, I believe, I should—have occasion to borrow a little of your morality, brother.

Jos. O fie, brother—the man who can jest—

Char. O, that's very true, as you were going to observe—But, Joseph, do you know that I am surprised at your suspecting me with Lady Teazle. I thought you was always the favourite there.

Jos. Me !

Char. Why yes, I have seen you exchange such significant glances.

Jos. Pshaw !

Char. Yes, I have ; and don't you remember when I came in here, and caught you and her at—

Jos. I must stop him. (*Aside.*) [Stops his mouth.] Sir Peter has overheard every word that you have said.

Char. Sir Peter ! where is he ?—What, in the closet ?—Foregad, I'll have him out.

Jos. No, no.

[Stopping him.]

Char. I will—Sir Peter Teazle come into court.

Enter SIR PETER.

What, my old guardian turn inquisitor, and take evidence incog.

Sir P. Give me your hand—I own, my dear boy, I have suspected you wrongfully ; but you must not be angry with Joseph, it was my plot, and I shall think of you as long as I live for what I overheard.

Char. Then 'tis well you did not hear more. Is it not, Joseph ?

Sir P. What, you would have retorted on Joseph, would you ?

Char. And yet you might as well have suspected him as me, might he not, Joseph ?

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. [Whispering JOSEPH.] Lady Sneerwell, sir, is just coming up, and says she must see you.

Jos. Gentlemen, I must beg your pardon ; I have com-

pany waiting for me; give me leave to conduct you down stairs.

Char. No, no, speak to them in another room; I have not seen Sir Peter a great while, and I want to talk with him.

Jos. Well, I'll send away the person and return immediately. Sir Peter, not a word of the little French milliner.

[Aside and exit.]

Sir P. Ah, Charles, what a pity you don't associate more with your brother; we then might have some hopes of your reformation; he's a young man of such sentiments—Ah, there is nothing in this world so noble as a man of sentiment.

Char. Oh, he's too moral by half; and so apprehensive of his good name, that I dare say he would as soon let a priest into his house as a wench.

Sir P. No, no, you accuse him wrongfully—Though Joseph is no rake, he is no saint.

Char. Oh! a perfect anchorite—a young hermit.

Sir P. Hush, hush; don't abuse him, or he may chance to hear of it again.

Char. Why, you won't tell him, will you?

Sir P. No, no, but—I have a great mind to tell him.
[*Aside, seems to hesitate.*]—Hark'ye, Charles, have you a mind for a laugh at Joseph?

Char. I should like it of all things—let's have it.

Sir P. 'Gad, I'll tell him—I'll be even with Joseph for discovering me in the closet.—(*Aside.*)—Hark'ye, Charles, he had a girl with him when I called.

Char. Who, Joseph? impossible!

Sir P. Yes, a little French milliner, [*Takes him to the front.*]-and the best of the joke is, she is now in the room.

Char. The devil she is!—Where?

Sir P. Hush, hush—behind the screen.

Char. I'll have her out.

Sir P. No, no, no.

Char. Yes.

Sir P. No.

Char. By the Lord I will—So now for it.

[*Both run up to the screen.—The screen falls, at the same time JOSEPH enters.*]

Char. Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful!

Sir P. Lady Teazle, by all that's horrible !

Char. Sir Peter, this is the smartest little French milliner I ever saw—But pray what is the meaning of all this ? You seem to have been playing at hide and seek here, and for my part, I don't know who's in or who's out of the secret—Madam, will you please to explain ;—Not a word ! —Brother, is it your pleasure to illustrate ?—Morality dumb too ! Well, though I can make nothing of it, I suppose you perfectly understand one another, good folks, and so I leave you. Brother, I am sorry you have given that worthy man so much cause for uneasiness—Sir Peter, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.—Ha, ha, ha.

[Exit.]

Jos. Sir Peter, notwithstanding appearances are against me—if—if you'll give me leave—I'll explain every thing to your satisfaction.

Sir P. If you please, sir.

Jos. Lady Teazle knowing my—Lady Teazle—I say—knowing my pretensions—to your ward—Maria—and—Lady Teazle—I say—knowing the jealousy of my—of your temper—she called in here—in order that she—that I—might explain—what these pretensions were—And—hearing you were coming—and—as I said before—knowing the jealousy of your temper—she—my Lady Teazle—I say—went behind the screen—and—This is a full and clear account of the whole affair.

Sir P. A very clear account truly ! and I dare say the lady will vouch for the truth of every word of it.

Lady T. (Advancing.) For not one syllable, Sir Peter.

Sir P. What the devil ! don't you think it worth your while to agree in the lie ?

Lady T. There's not a word of truth in what that gentleman has been saying.

Jos. Zounds, madam, you won't ruin me.

Lady T. Stand out of the way, Mr Hypocrite, I'll speak for myself.

Sir P. Aye, aye—let her alone—she'll make a better story than you did.

Lady T. I came here with no intention of listening to his addresses to Maria, and even ignorant of his pretensions ; but seduced by his insidious arts, at least to listen

to his addresses, if not to sacrifice his honour, as well as my own, to his unwarrantable desires.

Sir P. Now I believe the truth is coming indeed.

Jos. What, is the woman mad?

Lady T. No, sir, she has recovered her senses. Sir Peter, I cannot expect you'll credit me; but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I am certain you did not know I was within hearing, has penetrated so deep into my heart, that could I have escaped the mortification of this discovery, my future life should have convinced you of my sincere repentance. As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he pretended an honourable passion for his ward, I now view him in so despicable a light, that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to his addresses. [Exit.

Jos. Sir Peter—Notwithstanding all this—Heaven is my witness—

Sir P. That you are a villain, and so I'll leave you to your meditations.—

Jos. Nay, Sir Peter, you must not leave me—The man who shuts his ears against conviction—

Sir P. Oh damn your sentiments—damn your sentiments.— [Exit, JOSEPH following.]

ACT V.—SCENE I.

JOSEPH SURFACE'S Apartments.

Enter JOSEPH and a SERVANT.

Jos. Mr Stanley! why should you think I would see Mr Stanley! you know well enough he comes intreating for something.

Serv. They let him in before I knew of it; and old Rowley is with him.

Jos. 'Psha, you blockhead; I am so distracted with my own misfortunes, I am not in a humour to speak with any one—but shew the fellow up. (Exit SERVANT.) Sure fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before.—My character ruined with Sir Peter—my hopes of Maria lost—I'm in a pretty humour to listen to poor relations

truly.—I shan't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on old Stanley. Oh, here he comes; I'll retire, and endeavour to put a little charity in my face however. [Exit.

Enter Sir Oliver and Rowley.

Sir O. What, does he avoid us? That was him, was it not?

Rowl. Yes, sir; but his nerves are too weak to bear the sight of a poor relation: I should have come first to break the matter to him.

Sir O. A plague of his nerves!—yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of the most benevolent way of thinking.

Rowl. Yes—he has as much speculative benevolence as any man in the kingdom, though he is not so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

Sir O. Yet he has a string of sentiments, I suppose, at his finger ends.

Rowl. And his favourite one is, ‘That charity begins at home.’

Sir O. And his, I presume, is of that domestic sort, which never stirs abroad at all.

Rowl. Well, sir, I'll leave you to introduce yourself as old Stanley; I must be here again to announce you in your real character.

Sir O. True—and you'll afterwards meet me at Sir Peter's.

Rowl. Without losing a moment. [Exit Rowley.

Sir O. Here he comes—I don't like the complaisance of his features.

Enter Joseph.

Jos. Sir, your most obedient; I beg pardon for keeping you a moment—Mr Stanley, I presume.

Sir O. At your service, sir.

Jos. Pray, be seated, Mr Stanley, I intreat you, sir.

Sir O. Dear sir, there's no occasion. Too ceremonious by half. [Aside.

Jos. Though I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, I am very glad to see you look so well.—I think, Mr Stanley, you was nearly related to my mother.

Sir O. I was, sir; so nearly, that my present poverty I fear may do discredit to her wealthy children; else I would not presume to trouble you now.

Jos. Ah, sir, don't mention that—For the man who is in distress has ever a right to claim kindred with the wealthy ; I am sure I wish I was of that number, or that it was in my power even to afford you a small relief.

Sir O. If your uncle Sir Oliver was here, I should have a friend.

Jos. I wish he was, sir, you should not want an advocate with him, believe me.

Sir O. I should not need one, my distresses would recommend me. But I imagined his bounty had enabled you to be the agent of his charities.

Jos. Ah, sir, you are mistaken; avarice, avarice, Mr Stanley, is the vice of age : to be sure it has been spread abroad that he has been very bountiful to me, but without the least foundation, though I never chose to contradict the report.

Sir O. And has he never remitted you bullion, rupees, or pagodas.

Jos. Oh, dear sir, no such thing. I have indeed received some trifling presents from him, such as shawls, avadavats, and Indian crackers ; nothing more, sir.

Sir O. There's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds
(Aside.) Shawls, avadavats, and Indian crackers !

Jos. Then there's my brother, Mr Stanley ; one would scarce believe what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

Sir O. Not I for one.

[*Aside.*]

Jos. Oh, the sums I have lent him !——Well, 'twas an amiable weakness—I must own I can't defend it, tho' it appears more blameable at present, as it prevents me from serving you, Mr Stanley, as my heart directs.

Sir O. Dissembler !—*(Aside.)*—then you cannot assist me.

Jos. I am very unhappy to say it's not in my power at present ; but you may depend upon hearing from me when I can be of any service to you.

Sir O. Sweet sir, you are too good.

Jos. Not at all, sir ; to pity without the power to relieve, is still more painful than to ask and to be denied. Mr Stanley, you have deeply affected me. Sir, your most devoted ; I wish you health and spirits.

Sir O. Your ever grateful and perpetual *(Bowing low.)* humble servant.

Jos. I am extremely sorry, sir, for your misfortunes—Here, open the door—Mr Stanley, your most devoted.

Sir O. Your most obliged servant. Charles, you are my heir. [Aside, and exit.]

Jos. This is another of the evils that attends a man having so good a character—It subjects him to the importunity of the necessitous—the pure and sterling ore of charity is a very expensive article in the catalogue of man's virtues; whereas, the sentimental French plate I use answers the purpose full as well, and pays no tax. [Going.]

Enter Rowley.

Rowl. Mr Surface, your most obedient; I wait on you from your uncle who is just arrived. [Gives him a note.]

Jos. How! Sir Oliver arrived!—Here, Mr.—call back Mr Stanley.

Rowl. It's too late, sir, I met him going out of the house.

Jos. Was ever any thing so unfortunate!—(Aside.)—I hope my uncle has enjoyed good health and spirits.

Rowl. Oh, very good, sir; he bid me inform you he'll wait on you within this half hour.

Jos. Present him my kind love and duty, and assure him I'm quite impatient to see him. [Bowing.]

Rowl. I shall, sir. [Exit.]

Jos. Pray, do, sir. (Bows.)—This was the most cursed piece of ill luck. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

SIR PETER TEAZLE'S HOUSE.

Enter Mrs Candour and Maid.

Maid. Indeed, madam, my lady will see no one at present.

Mrs C. Did you tell her it was her friend, Mrs Candour?

Maid. I did, madam; and she begs to be excused.

Mrs C. Go again, for I am sure she must be greatly distressed. [Exit Maid.] How provoking to be kept waiting—I am not mistress of half the circumstances—I shall have the whole affair in the newspapers, with the parties' names at full length, before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses.

Enter SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.

Oh, Sir Benjamin, I am glad you are come; have you heard of Lady Teazle's affair?—Well, I never was so surprised—and I am so distressed for the parties.

Sir B. Nay, I can't say I pity Sir Peter, he was always so partial to Mr Surface.

Mrs C. Mr Surface! Why, it was Charles.

Sir B. Oh, no, madam; Mr Surface was the gallant.

Mrs C. No, Charles was the lover; and Mr Surface, to do him justice, was the cause of the discovery, he brought Sir Peter, and—

Sir B. Oh, my dear madam, no such thing; for I had it from—

Mrs C. Yes, and I had it from one, that had it from one, that knew—

Sir B. And I had it from one—

Mrs C. No such thing—but here comes my Lady Sneerwell, and perhaps she might have heard the particulars.

Enter LADY SNEERWELL.

Lady S. Oh, dear Mrs Candour, here's a sad affair about our friend, Lady Teazle.

Mrs C. Why, to be sure, poor thing, I am much concerned for her.

Lady S. I protest so am I—though I must confess she was always too lively for me.

Mrs C. But she had a great deal of good-nature.

Sir B. And had a very ready wit.

Mrs C. But do you know all the particulars? [To LADY S.

Sir B. Yet who could have suspected Mr Surface!

Mrs C. Charles, you mean.

Sir B. No, Mr Surface.

Mrs C. Oh, 'twas Charles.

Lady S. Charles!

Mrs C. Yes, Charles.

Sir B. I'll not pretend to dispute with you, Mrs Candour; but be it as it may, I hope Sir Peter's wounds won't prove mortal.

Mrs C. Sir Peter's wounds! what, did they fight? I never heard a word of that.

Sir B. No!

Mrs C. No—

Lady S. Nor I a syllable: do, dear Sir Benjamin, tell us.

Sir B. Oh, my dear madam, then you don't know half the affair—Why—why—I'll tell you—Sir Peter, you must know, had a long time suspected Lady Teazle's visits to Mr Surface—

Mrs C. To Charles, you mean.

Sir B. No, Mr Surface,—and upon going to his house, and finding Lady Teazle there,—Sir, says Sir Peter, you are a very ungrateful fellow.

Mrs C. Ay, that was Charles.

Sir B. Mr Surface—And old as I am, says he, I demand immediate satisfaction: upon this, they both drew their swords, and to it they fell.

Mrs C. That must be Charles; for it is very unlikely that Mr Surface should fight him in his own house.

Sir B. 'Sdeath, madam, not at all! Lady Teazle, upon seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the room in strong hysterics, and was followed by Charles, calling out for hartshorn and water. They fought, and Sir Peter received a wound in his right side, by the thrust of a small sword.

Enter CRAETREE.

Crab. Pistols, pistols, nephew!

Mrs C. Oh, Mr Crabtree, I am glad you are come; now we shall have the whole affair.

Sir B. No, no, it was a small sword, uncle.

Crab. Zounds, nephew, I say it was a pistol.

Sir B. A thrust in second, through the small gut.

Crab. A bullet lodged in the thorax.

Sir B. But give me leave, dear uncle, it was a small sword.

Crab. I tell you it was a pistol—Won't you suffer any body to know any thing but yourself?—It was a pistol, and Charles—

Mrs C. Ay! I knew it was Charles.

Sir B. Mr Surface, uncle.

Crab. Why, zounds! I say it was Charles; must no body speak but yourself, I'll tell you how the whole affair was.

Lady S. & Mrs C. Ay, do, do; pray tell us.

Sir B. I see my uncle knows nothing at all about the matter.

Crab. Mr Surface, you must know, ladies, came late

from Salthill, where he had been the evening before with a particular friend of his, who has a son at Eton ; his pistols were left in the bureau, and unfortunately loaded, and on Sir Peter's taxing Charles—

Sir B. Mr Surface, you mean.

Crab. Do, pray nephew, hold your tongue, and let me speak sometimes—I say, ladies, upon his taking Charles to account, and taxing him with the basest ingratitude—

Sir B. Ay, ladies, I told you Sir Peter taxed him with ingratitude.

Crab. They agreed each to take a pistol—They fired at the same instant—Charles's ball took place, and lodged in the thorax. Sir Peter's missed ; and what is very extraordinary, the ball grazed against a little bronze Shakespeare that stood over the chimney, flew off through the window, at right angles, and wounded the postman, who was just come to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire.

Sir B. I heard nothing of all this ! I must own, ladies, my uncle's account is more circumstantial, though I believe mine is the true one.

Lady S. I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information. [Aside and exit.

Sir B. Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

Crab. Why, yes ; they do say—but that's neither here nor there.

Mrs C. But pray where is Sir Peter now ? I hope his wound won't prove mortal.

Crab. He was carried home immediately, and has given positive orders to be denied to every body.

Sir B. And I believe Lady Teazle is attending him.

Mrs C. I believe so too.

Crab. Certainly I met one of the faculty as I came in.

Sir B. 'Gad so ! and here he comes.

Crab. Yes, yes, that's the doctor.

Mrs C. That certainly must be the physician—Now we shall get information.

Enter SIR OLIVER.

Dear doctor, how is your patient ?

Sir B. I hope his wounds are not mortal.

Crab. Is he in a fair way of recovery ?

Sir B. Pray, doctor, was he not wounded by a thrust of a sword through the small guts?

Crab. Was it not by a bullet that lodged in the thorax?

Sir B. Nay, pray answer me.

Crab. Dear, dear doctor, speak. [All pulling him.

Sir O. Hey, hey, good people, are you all mad?—Why, what the devil is the matter?—a sword through the small guts, and a bullet lodged in the thorax? What would you all be at?

Sir B. Then, perhaps, sir, you are not a doctor?

Sir O. If I am, sir, I am to thank you for my degree.

Crab. Only a particular friend, I suppose.

Sir O. Nothing more, sir.

Sir B. Then, I suppose, as you are a friend, you can be better able to give us some account of his wounds.

Sir O. Wounds!

Mrs C. What! hav'n't you heard he was wounded?—The saddest accident—

Sir B. A thrust with a sword through the small guts.

Crab. A bullet in the thorax.

Sir O. Good people, speak one at a time, I beseech you—You both agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

Crab. & Sir B. Ay, ay, we both agree in that.

Sir O. Then I will be bold to say, Sir Peter is one of the most imprudent men in the world, for here he comes, walking as if nothing had happened.

Enter SIR PETER.

My good friend, you are certainly mad to walk about in this condition; you should go to bed, you that have had a sword through your small guts, and a bullet lodged in your thorax.

Sir P. A sword through my small guts, and a bullet lodged in my thorax!

Sir O. Yes, these worthy people would have killed you without law or physic, and wanted to dub me a doctor, in order to make me an accomplice.

Sir P. What is all this?

Sir B. Sir Peter, we are very glad to find the story of the duel is not true.

Crab. And exceedingly sorry for your other misfortunes.

Sir P. So, so—all over the town already. [Aside.

Mrs C. Though as Sir Peter was so good husband, I pity him sincerely.

Sir P. Plague of your pity.

Crab. As you continued so long a bachelor, you were certainly to blame to marry at all.

Sir P. Sir, I desire you'll consider this is my own house.

Sir B. However, you must not be offended at the jest you'll meet on this occasion.

Crab. It is no uncommon case, that's one thing.

Sir P. I insist upon being master here: in plain terms I desire you'll leave my house immediately.

Mrs C. Well, well, sir, we are going, and you may depend upon it, we shall make the best of the story. [Exit]

Sir B. And tell how badly you have been treated.

Sir P. Leave my house directly. [Exit SIR BENJAMIN]

Crab. And how patiently you bear it. [Exit]

Sir P. Leave my house, I say—Fiends, furies, there is no bearing of it!

Enter ROWLEY.

Sir O. Well, Sir Peter, I have seen my nephews.

Rowl. And Sir Oliver is convinced your judgment is right after all.

Sir O. Aye, Joseph is the man.

Rowl. Such sentiments.

Sir O. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Rowl. Oh, 'tis edification to hear him talk.

Sir O. He is a pattern to the young men of the age. But how comes it, Sir Peter, that you don't join in his praises?

Sir P. Sir Oliver, we live in a damn'd wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

Sir O. Right, right, my old friend—But was you always so moderate in your judgment?

Rowl. Do you say so, Sir Peter; you who was never mistaken in your life?

Sir P. Oh, the plague of your jokes—I suppose you are acquainted with the whole affair.

Rowl. I am indeed, sir.—I met Lady Teazle returning from Mr Surface's, so humbled, that she deign'd to be even me to become her advocate.

Sir P. What! does Sir Oliver know it too?

Sir O. Aye, aye, every circumstance.

Sir P. What! about the closet and the screen?

Sir O. Yes, and the little French milliner too. I never laughed more in my life.

Sir P. And a very pleasant jest it was.

Sir O. This is your man of sentiment, Sir Peter.

Sir P. Oh, damn his sentiments.

Sir O. You must have made a pretty appearance when Charles dragged you out of the closet.

Sir P. Yes, yes, that was very diverting.

Sir O. And egad, Sir Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down.

Sir P. My face when the screen was thrown down !

Oh yes !—There's no bearing this. [Aside.]

Sir O. Come, come, my old friend, don't be vexed, for I can't help laughing for the soul of me.—Ha, ha, ha !

Sir P. Oh, laugh on.—I am not vexed—no, no, it is the pleasantest thing in the world. To be the standing jest of all one's acquaintance, 'tis the happiest situation imaginable.

Rowl. See, sir, yonder's my Lady Teazle coming this way, and in tears ; let me beg of you to be reconciled.

Sir O. Well, well, I'll leave Rowley to mediate between you, and take my leave ; but you must make haste after me to Mr Surface's, where I go, if not to reclaim a libertine, at least to expose hypocrisy. [Exit.]

Sir P. I'll be with you at the discovery ; I should like to see it, though it is a vile unlucky place for discoveries. Rowley, (Looking out.) she's not coming this way.

Rowl. No, sir, but she has left the room-door open, and waits your coming.

Sir P. Well, certainly mortification is very becoming in a wife—Don't you think I had best let her pine a little longer ?

Rowl. Oh, sir, that's being too severe.

Sir P. I don't think so ; the letter I found from Charles was evidently intended for her.

Rowl. Indeed, Sir Peter, you are much mistaken.

Sir P. If I was convinced of that—see, Mr Rowley, she looks this way—what a remarkable elegant turn of the head she has—I have a good mind to go to her.

Rowl. Do, dear sir.

Sir P. But when it is known that we are reconciled, I shall be laughed at more than ever.

Rowl. Let them laugh on, and retort their malice upon themselves, by shewing them you can be happy in spite of their slander.

Sir P. Faith, and so I will, Mr Rowley, and my Lady Teazle and I may still be the happiest couple in the country.

Rowl. O fie, Sir Peter, he that lays aside suspicion—

Sir P. My dear Rowley, if you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter any thing like a sentiment again : I have had enough of that to last the remainder of my life.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

JOSEPH's Library.—Enter JOSEPH and LADY SNEERWELL.

Lady S. Impossible ! Will not Sir Peter be immediately reconciled to Charles, and no longer oppose his union to Maria ?

Jos. Can passion mend it ?

Lady S. No, nor cunning neither. I was a fool to league with such a blunderer.

Jos. Sure, my Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer in this affair, and yet, you see, I bear it with calmness.

Lady S. Because the disappointment does not reach your heart ; your interest was only concerned. Had you felt for Maria, what I do for that unfortunate libertine your brother, you would not be dissuaded from taking every revenge in your power.

Jos. Why will you rail at me for the disappointment ?

Lady S. Are you not the cause ? Had you not a sufficient field for your roguery in imposing upon Sir Peter, and supplanting your brother, but you must endeavour to seduce his wife. I hate such an avarice of crimes ; 'tis an unfair monopoly, and never prospers.

Jos. Well, I own I am to blame—I have deviated from the direct rule of wrong. Yet, I cannot think circumstances are so bad as your ladyship apprehends.

Lady S. No !

Jos. You tell me you have made another trial of Snake, that he still proves steady to our interest, and that he is ready, if occasion requires, to swear to a contract having been passed between Charles and your ladyship.

Lady S. And what then ?

Jos. Why, the letters which have been so carefully circulated, will corroborate his evidence, and prove the truth

of the assertion. But I expect my uncle every moment, and must beg your ladyship to retire into the next room.

Lady S. But if he should find me out?

Jos. I have no fear of that—Sir Peter won't tell for his own sake, and I shall soon find out Sir Oliver's weak side.

Lady S. Nay, I have no doubt of your abilities, only be constant to one villany at a time.

Jos. Well, I will, I will.—(*Exit LADY SNEERWELL.*)—It is confounded hard, though, to be baited by one's confederates in wickedness—(*Knocking.*)—Whom have we got here? My uncle Oliver, I suppose—Oh, old Stanley again! How came he here? He must not stay—

Enter SIR OLIVER.

I told you already, Mr Stanley, that it was not in my power to relieve you.

Sir O. But I hear, sir, that Sir Oliver is arrived, and perhaps he might.

Jos. Well, sir; you cannot stay now, sir; but any other time, sir, you shall certainly be relieved.

Sir O. Oh, Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

Jos. I must insist on your going. Indeed, Mr Stanley, you can't stay.

Sir O. Positively I must see Sir Oliver.

Jos. Then positively you shan't stay. [Pushing him out.]

Enter CHARLES.

Char. Hey day! what's the matter? Why, who the devil have we got here? What, my little Premium! Oh, brother, you must not hurt my little broker. But harkye, Joseph; what, have you been borrowing money too?

Jos. Borrowing money! No, brother—We expect my uncle Oliver here every minute, and Mr Stanley insists upon seeing him.

Char. Stanley! Why, his name is Premium.

Jos. No, no; I tell you his name is Stanley.

Char. But I tell you again, his name is Premium.

Jos. It don't signify what his name is.

Char. No more it don't, as you say, brother; for I suppose he goes by half an hundred names, besides A. B. at the coffee-houses. But old Noll must not come and catch my little broker here neither.

Jos. Mr Stanley, I beg—

Char. And I beg, Mr Premium—

Jos. You must go indeed, Mr Stanley.

Char. Ay, you must go, Mr Premium. [Both pushing him.

Enter SIR PETER, LADY TEAZLE, MARIA, and ROWLEY.

Sir P. What, my old friend Sir Oliver! what's the matter?—In the name of wonder, were there ever two such ungracious nephews, to assault their uncle at his first visit.

Lady T. On my word, sir, it was well we came to your rescue.

Jos. Charles!

Char. Joseph!

Jos. Now our ruin is complete.

Char. Very.

Sir P. You find, Sir Oliver, your necessitous character of old Stanley could not protect you.

Sir O. No! nor Premium neither. The necessities of the former could not extract a shilling from that benevolent gentleman there; and with the other I stood a worse chance than my ancestors, and had like to have been knocked down without being bid for. Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley, look upon that elder nephew of mine: you both know what I have done for him, and how gladly I would have looked upon half my fortune as held only in trust for him. Judge then of my surprise and disappointment, at finding him destitute of truth, charity, and gratitude!

Sir P. Sir Oliver, I should be as much surprised as you, if I did not know him to be artful, selfish, and hypocritical.

Lady T. And if he pleads not guilty to all this, let him call on me to finish his character.

Sir P. Then I believe we need not add more; for if he knows himself, it will be a sufficient punishment for him that he is known by the world.

Char. If they talk this way to Honesty, what will they say to me by and by. [Aside]

Sir O. As for the profligate there— [Pointing to CHAR.]

Char. Ay, now comes my turn—the dama'd family pictures will ruin me. [Aside]

Jos. Sir Oliver, will you honour me with a hearing?

Char. Now, if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I should have time to recollect myself. [Aside]

Sir P. I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself entirely.

Jos. I trust I could, sir.

Sir O. Pshaw ! [Turns away from him.] And I suppose you could justify yourself too ? [To CHARLES.]

Char. Not that I know of, sir.

Sir O. What, my little Premium was let too much into the secret.

Char. Why, yes, sir, but they were family secrets, and should go no further.

Row. Come, come, Sir Oliver, I am sure you cannot look upon Charles's follies with anger.

Sir O. No, nor with gravity neither.—Do you know, Sir Peter, the young rogue has been selling me his ancestors. I have bought judges and staff officers by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as old china.

[During this speech, CHARLES laughs behind his hat.]

Char. Why, that I have made free with the family-canvas, is true ; my ancestors may rise in judgment against me, there's no denying it ; but, believe me, when I tell you (and upon my soul I would not say it if it was not so), if I don't appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is, because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction at seeing you, my liberal benefactor. [Embraces him.]

Sir O. Charles, I forgive you ; give me your hand again ; the little ill-looking fellow over the settee has made your peace for you.

Char. Then, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

Lady T. Sir Oliver, here is another, with whom I dare say Charles is no less anxious to be reconciled.

Sir O. I have heard of that attachment before, and with the lady's leave—if I construe right, that blush—

Sir P. Well, child, speak for yourself.

Mar. I have little more to say, than that I wish him happy, and for any influence I might once have had over his affections, I most willingly resign them to one who has a better claim to them.

Sir P. Hey ! what's the matter now ? While he was a rake and a profligate, you would hear of nobody else ; and now that he's likely to reform, you won't have him. What's the meaning of all this ?

Mar. His own heart, and Lady Sneerwell, can best inform you.

Char. Lady Sneerwell.

Jos. I am very sorry, brother, I am obliged to speak to this point, but justice demands it from me; and Lady Sneerwell's wrongs can no longer be concealed.

Enter LADY SNEERWELL.

Sir P. Another French milliner! I believe he has one in every room in the house.

Lady S. Ungrateful Charles! well you may seem confounded and surprised at the indelicate situation to which your perfidy has reduced me.

Char. Pray, uncle, is this another of your plots? for, as I live, this is the first time I ever heard of it.

Jos. There is but one witness, I believe, necessary for the business.

Sir P. And that witness is Mr Snake—you were perfectly in the right in bringing him with you.—Let him appear.

Rowl. Desire Mr Snake to walk in.—It is rather unlucky, madam, that he should be brought to confront, and not support your ladyship.

Enter SNAKE.

Lady S. I am surprised! what, speak, villain! have you too conspired against me?

Snake. I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons! I must own you paid me very liberal for the lying questions, but I have unfortunately been offered double for speaking the truth.

Sir P. Plot and counter-plot—I give your ladyship much joy of your negociation.

Lady S. May the torment of despair and disappointment light upon you all. [Going.

Lady T. Hold, Lady Sneerwell; before you go, give me leave to return you thanks, for the trouble you and this gentleman took in writing letters in my name to Charles, and answering them yourself;—and, at the same time, I must beg you will present my compliments to the scandalous college, of which you are president, and inform them, that Lady Teazle, licentiate, returns the diploma they granted her, as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

Lady S. You too, madam! provoking, insolent!—may your husband live these fifty years. [Exit.

Lady T. O Lord—what a malicious creature it is!

Sir P. Not for her last wish, I hope.

Lady T. Oh, no, no.

Sir P. Well, sir—what have you to say for yourself?

[To JOSEPH.]

Jos. Sir, I am so confounded that Lady Sneerwell should impose upon us all, by suborning Mr Snake, that I know not what to say—but—lest her malice should prompt her to injure my brother—I had better follow her.

[Exit.]

Sir P. Moral to the last.

Sir O. Marry her, Joseph, marry her if you can—Oil and vinegar—you'll do very well together.

Rowl. Mr Snake, I believe we have no further occasion for you.

Snake. Before I go, I must beg pardon of these good ladies and gentlemen, for whatever trouble I have been the humble instrument of causing.

Sir P. You have made amends by your open confession.

Snake. But I must beg as a favour, that it may never be spoken of.

Sir P. What! are you ashamed of having done one good action in your life?

Snake. Sir, I request you to consider that I live by the badness of my character, and if it was once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world. [Exit.]

Sir O. Never fear, we shan't traduce you by saying anything in your praise.

Sir P. There's a precious rogue for you.

Lady T. You see, Sir Oliver, it needed no great persuasion to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

Sir O. So much the better; I'll have the wedding tomorrow morning.

Sir P. What! before you ask the girl's consent?

Char. I have done that a long time since—above a minute ago—and she looked—

Mar. O fie, Charles—I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word said.

Sir O. Well, well, the less the better—[joining their hands]—there—and may your loves never know abatement.

Sir P. And may you live as happily together as Lady Teazle and I—intend to do.

Char. I suspect, Rowley, I owe much to you.

Sir O. You do, indeed.

Rowl. Sir, if I have failed in my endeavours to serve you, you would have been indebted to me for the attempt. But deserve to be happy, and you overpay me.

Sir P. Ay, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

Char. Look ye, Sir Peter, as to reforming, I shall make no promises, and that I take to be the strongest proof that I intend setting about it. But here shall be my monitor, my gentle guide—can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine.

Tho' thou, dear maid, should'st wave thy beauty's sway,
Thou still must rule, because I will obey ;
An humble fugitive from folly view,
No sanctuary near but love and you ;
You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,
For even scandal dies—if you approve. [*Exeunt Omnes.*

PROLOGUE.

A SCHOOL for Scandal !—Tell me, I beseech you,
Needs there a school this modish art to teach you ?
No need of lessons now—the knowing think—
We might as well be taught to eat and drink :
Caus'd by a dearth of Scandal, should the vapours
Distress our fair ones, let them read the papers ;
Their powerful mixtures such disorders hint,
Crave what they will; there's *quantum sufficit*.

“ Lord !” cries my Lady Wormwood, (who loves tattle,
And puts much salt and pepper in her prattle)
Just risen at noon, all night at cards, when threshing—
Strong tea and Scandal—bless me, how refreshing !
“ Give me the papers. Lisp—how bold and free ! (*sips*)
“ Last night Lord L. (*sips*) was caught with Lady D.
“ For aching heads, what charming *sal volatile* ! (*sips*)
“ If Mrs B. will still continue flirting,
“ We hope she'll draw, or we'll undraw the curtain,—
“ Fine satire ! poz ! in public all abuse it ;
“ But, by ourselves (*sips*) our praise we can't refuse it.

" Now Lisp, read you—there at that dash and star"— }
 " Yes, ma'am—a certain Lord had best beware,
 " Who lives not many miles from Grosvenor-square. }
 " For should he Lady W. find willing—
 " *Wormwood* is bitter"— " Oh ! that's me—the villain !
 " Throw it behind the fire, and never more
 " Let that vile paper come within my door."

Thus at our friends we laugh, who feel the dart,
 To reach *our* feelings we ourselves must smart.
 Is our young bard so young, to think that he
 Can stop the full spring-tide of calumny ?
 Knows he the world so little, and its trade ?
 Alas ! the devil's sooner *rais'd* than *laid*.
 So strong, so swift the monster, there's no gagging :
 Cut Scandal's head off—still the tongue is wagging.
 Proud of your smiles, once lavishly bestow'd,
 Again our young Don Quixote takes the road,
 To shew his gratitude, he draws his pen,
 And seeks this Hydra, Scandal, in its den ;
 From his fell gripe the frightened fair to save—
 Tho' he should fall, th' attempt must please the brave ;
 For your applause, all perils he would through ;
 He'll fight—that's write—a cavaliero true,
 Till every drop of blood—that's ink—is spilt for you. }

EPILOGUE.

I, who was late so volatile and gay,
 Like a trade-wind, must now blow all one way ;
 Bend all my cares, my studies, and my vows,
 To one old rusty weather-cock—my spouse ;
 So wills our virtuous bard—the pye-bald Bayes
 Of crying epilogues and laughing plays.

Old bachelors, who marry smart young wives,
 Learn from our play to regulate your lives !
 Each bring his dear to town—all faults upon her—
 London will prove the very source of honour.
 Plung'd fairly in, like a cold bath it serves,
 When principles relax—to brace the nerves,

Such is my case—and yet I must deplore
 That the gay dream of dissipation's o'er;
 And say, ye fair, was every lively wife,
 Born with a genius for the highest life,
 Like me, untimely blasted in her bloom;
 Like me, condemn'd to such a dismal doom;
 Save money—when I just knew how to waste it!
 Leave London—just as I began to taste it!
 Must I then watch the early crowing cock?
 The melancholy ticking of a clock?
 In the lone rustic hall for ever bounded,
 With dogs, cats, rats, and squalling brats, surrounded.
 With humble curates can I now retire,
 (While good Sir Peter boozes with the squire)
 And at back-gammon mortify my soul,
 That pants for Lu, or flutters at a Vole;
 Seven's the main! dear sound! that must expire,
 Roast at hot cockles round a Christmas fire!
 The transient hour of fashion too soon spent.
 " Farewell the tranquil mind; farewell content,
 " Farewell the plumed head--the cushion'd tete,
 " That takes the cushion from its proper seat!
 " The spirit-stirring drum! card drums I mean—
 " Spadille, odd Trick, Pam, Basto, King and Queen.
 " And you, ye knockers, that with brazen throat,
 " The welcome visitor's approach denote,
 " Farewell! All quality of high renown,
 " Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious town,
 " Farewell! your revels I partake no more,
 " And Lady Teazle's occupation's o'er!"

All this I told our bard; he smil'd, and said 'twas clear
 I ought to play deep tragedy next year:
 Mean while he drew wise morals from his play,
 And in these solemn periods stalk'd away.
 " Blest were the fair, like you her faults who stopt,
 " And clos'd her follies when the curtain dropt!
 " No more in vice or error to engage,
 " Or play the fool at large on life's great stage!"



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s clear